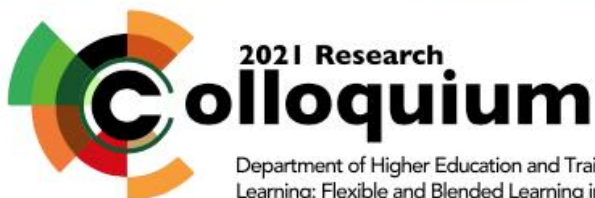


2021 DHET RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

**ON OPEN LEARNING:
FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED
LEARNING IN POST-SCHOOL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING**



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All material pertaining to the Colloquium (including presentations and videos) are available on the Research Colloquium website at www.dhetresearchcolloquium.co.za

Enquiries:

The Director: Policy, Research and Evaluation

Tel: +27 (0) 12 312 5297

Email: dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za

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ACRONYMS

4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
A/DG	Acting Director-General
A/DDG	Acting Deputy Director-General
A/CD	Acting Chief Director
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration
CD	Chief Director
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	Community Education and Training
CILT	Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching
CINOP	Centre for Innovation of Education and Training) (CINOP)
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
COOL	Cases on Open Learning
COP	Community/Communities of Practice
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DDG	Deputy Director-General
DG	Director-General
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DUT	Durban University of Technology
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HP	Hewlett Packard
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
ICDE	International Council for Open and Distance Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IP	Intellectual Property
JET	JET Education Services
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex
LMS	Learning Management System
LSS	Lecturer Support Service
LTE	Long Term Evolution
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMU	Nelson Mandela University
NOLS	National Open Learning System
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
ODL	Open Distance Learning
OEP	Open Educational Practices
OER	Open Educational Resources
OERAC	Open Educational Resources Advocacy Committee
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
QCs	Quality Councils
QCTO	Quality Council on Trade and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community

SAIDE	South African Institute of Distance Education
SAMRC	South African Medical Research Council
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAULM	Students Access to and Use of Learning Materials
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSS	Student Support Services
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UGF	University of Great Falls
UK	United Kingdom
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America
USAf	Universities South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WBL	Workplace-Based Learning
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM



Programme Director: Ms Trudi van Wyk, Acting Deputy Director-General (A/DDG), Planning, Policy and Strategy, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

SESSION 1: OPENING AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS



Chairperson: Dr Phil Mjwara, Acting Director-General (A/DG), DHET



Opening Remarks: Mr Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation



Presenter: Prof Asha Singh Kanwar,
President and Chief Executive Officer
(CEO), Commonwealth of Learning,
Canada

SESSION 2: GLOBAL AND CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE



Chairperson: Mr Imraan Patel, DDG,
Socio-Economic Innovation
Partnerships, Department of Science
and Innovation (DSI)



Presenter: Prof Mpine Makoe,
Chairholder of the Commonwealth of
Learning in Open Educational
Resources (OER)/Open Educational
Practices (OEP)



Presenter: Mr Peter van der Hijden,
Independent Higher Education
Strategy Advisor, Belgium



Presenter: Dr Ebba Ossiannilsson, Chair of the ICDE OER Advocacy Committee (OERAC) and ICDE OER Ambassador for Global Advocacy, Sweden

SESSION 3: OPEN LEARNING: FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED LEARNING – THE NEW NORMAL



Chairperson: Mr Randall Faulmann, Director: Open Learning, DHET



Presenter: Prof Gerrit Stols, Director, Education Innovation, University of Pretoria (UP)



Presenter: Ms Jenny Glennie, Director, South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE)



Presenter: Dr Nick Balkrishen, Regional Manager, Mpumalanga and North-West Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges, DHET

WEBINAR ONE: INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT



Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET



Presenter: Mr Matias Matias, Global Education Specialist, Advisory Board Member for Hewlett-Packard (HP) Foundation, HP Life Program HP Inc.



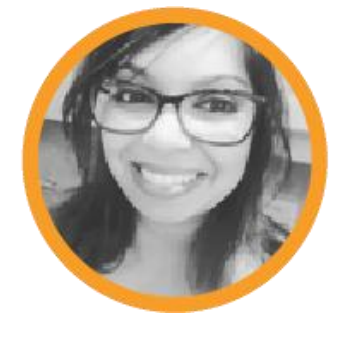
Presenter: Dr Sara Black, Teacher, Analyst and Researcher, University of Johannesburg (UJ)



Presenter: Mr Mukhtar Raban, Lecturer,
Nelson Mandela University (NMU)



Presenter: Ms Susan Gredley, Doctor of
Philosophy (PhD) candidate, University
of the Western Cape (UWC)



Presenter: Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj,
Lecturer, UJ

WEBINAR 2: LECTURER DEVELOPMENT AND OER



Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG,
Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET



Keynote Speaker: Prof Mpine Makoe,
Chairholder of the Commonwealth of
Learning in OER/OEP



Presenter: Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj,
Lecturer, UJ



Presenter: Dr Sara Black, Teacher,
Analyst and Researcher, UJ



Presenter: Ms Mahlatse Maake-Malatji,
PhD Student, University of Cape Town
(UCT)



Presenter: Ms Anelisa Dabula, PhD
Candidate, University of KwaZulu-Natal
(UKZN)

**WEBINAR 3: OPEN LEARNING THROUGH A
NEW QUALIFICATIONS PERSPECTIVE**



Chairperson: Ms Thembisa Futshane,
DDG, CET, DHET



Presenter: Dr Rooksana Rajab, Senior
Associate, JET Education Services



Presenter: Mr Christoph Vorwerk, Skills
Development Specialist,
Manufacturing, Engineering and
Related Services Sector Education and
Training Authority (merSETA)



Presenter: Ms Barbara Jones,
Curriculum Development Specialist,
UWC



Presenter: Ms Susan Gredley, PhD
candidate, UWC



Presenter: Dr Heidi Bolton, Senior
Manager, Research, South African
Qualifications Authority (SAQA)



Presenter: Mr Japie Nel, Senior
Manager, National Qualifications
Framework (NQF) Qualifications and
Professional Bodies, SAQA



Presenter: Wellington Radu, Senior Manager, Authentication Services, SAQA



Presenter: Mr Navin Vasudev, Manager, Business Development and Stakeholders, SAQA

WEBINAR 4: FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES IN PSET



Chairperson: Dr Thandi Lewin, A/DDG, University Education, DHET



Keynote Speaker: Prof Francois Strydom, Senior Director, Teaching and Learning, University of the Free State (UFS)



Presenter: Dr Cheng-Wen Huang,
Lecturer and Researcher, UCT



Presenter: Ms Gertrude van Wyk,
Teacher and Researcher, and Doctoral
student, Western Kentucky University



Presenter: Mr Mukhtar Raban, Lecturer,
NMU



Presenter: Ms Sinethemba Zungu,
Researcher, UKZN

WEBINAR 5: INCLUSIVITY IN PSET



Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG,
Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET



Keynote Speaker: Prof Linda Cooper,
Emerita Associate Professor, UCT



Presenter: Ms Gertrude van Wyk,
Teacher and Researcher, and Doctoral
student, Western Kentucky University



Presenter: Ms Sinethemba Zungu,
Researcher, UKZN



Presenter: Dr Pinky Mahlangu, Specialist Scientist, South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

SESSION 4: CASE STUDIES ON OPEN LEARNING (COOL)



Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET



Presenter: Dr Tabisa Mayisela, Lecturer and Principal Investigator for the COOL Project, UCT



Presenter: Prof Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams, Emeritus Associate Professor, UCT



Presenter: Prof Mpine Makoe,
Chairholder, Commonwealth of
Learning, OER/OEP



Presenter: Dr Rooksana Rajab, Senior
Associate, JET Education Services



Presenter: Prof Francois Strydom, Senior
Director, Teaching and Learning, UFS



Presenter: Prof Linda Cooper, Emerita
Associate Professor, UCT



Presenter: Prof Ramneek Ahluwalia,
CEO, Higher Health

SESSION 5: CLOSING



Chairperson: Mr Samuel Zamokuhle
Zungu, DDG, TVET, DHET



Presenter: Dr Linda Meyer, Director,
Operations, Universities of South Africa
(USAf)



Programme Director: Ms Trudi van Wyk,
A/DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy,
DHET



Vote of Thanks and Closure: Mr Reineth Mgiba, Acting Chief Director (A/CD), Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, DHET

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) would like to thank the collaborative partners with whom the Research Colloquium is hosted, i.e. the 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the three Quality Councils (QCs), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). These Departmental entities form part of the Department's Research Forum on Post-School Education and Training (PSET).

The Department extends its sincere gratitude to all the presenters, local and international, for sharing insightful content during the webinars and the Colloquium. The Department is most appreciative to all delegates that attended the events, without which the events would not have been the success that they were. The Department looks forward to working with these key stakeholders on implementing the recommendations arising from the Research Colloquium.

A huge thanks to the organisers for all the efforts in coordinating the events; special acknowledgement goes to the following contributors:

- The European Union (EU) for providing funding for the research Case Studies on Open Learning (COOL).
- The National Skills Fund (NSF) for providing funding to host the virtual Colloquium and the webinar series.
- The Service Provider, ForeFront, for hosting the Colloquium and webinar series. A special thanks goes to Ms Marcia Mahlalela, Mr Yokow Quansah, and Mr Lusanda Ganda, as well as Ms Yoko Bewick for developing the Colloquium report.
- Hewlett Packard (HP) for sponsoring laptops as prizes for the event.
- The officials in the Policy, Research and Evaluation Directorate and Open Learning Directorate, for coordinating the event: Ms Renay Pillay, Mr Randall Faulmann, Ms Rakal Govender, Ms Gina Umeh, Ms Gerda Venter, Mr Robert Zondi, Mr George Modiba; as well as, Mr Nashveer Nemesar from the DHET Communications Directorate.

- DDG Nolwazi Gasu, Ms Trudi Van Wyk and Mr Reineth Mgiba for their leadership and oversight.

BACKGROUND

On 22 September 2021, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), in collaboration with its entities (i.e. the 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the three Quality Councils, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)), jointly hosted the Research Colloquium on *Open Learning: Flexible and Blended Learning in Post-School Education and Training (PSET)*. The DHET also partnered with the University of Cape Town (UCT) for the Colloquium and webinar series from 7-20 September 2021.

The purpose of the Research Colloquium was to deepen the conversation amongst stakeholders, share research findings, and promote research utilisation and dissemination. The theme of 'Flexible and Blended Learning' was identified given its growing significance in the PSET landscape, especially in the light of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID)-19 pandemic, where virtual interactions had become the preferred, safer and more convenient choice for teaching and learning.

The Research Colloquium provided a platform for researchers to:

- Share new and emerging research on Open Learning, including blended and other modes of teaching and learning;
- Interrogate national and international research evidence on the benefits (or otherwise) of flexible and blended learning; and
- Identify research gaps in relation to Open Learning, including flexible and blended learning.

The Objectives of the Research Colloquium were to:

- Engage with research on Open Learning in PSET;
- Consider implications of the research for policy, strategy, planning and practice;
- Identify research gaps in relation to PSET in the context of Open Learning; and
- Debate whether and how diverse modes of teaching and learning could improve access to and quality of PSET.

The Outcomes of the Research Colloquium were to:

- Improve research utilisation to support evidence-based decision-making, policy and planning;
- Improve knowledge sharing to improve practices in relation to Open Learning; and
- Improve understanding of Open Learning (including diverse modes of teaching and learning).

To date, the DHET has hosted seven Colloquia, and these include:

Theme	Date
1. State of Research on PSET	04 November 2014
2. Towards Successful Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) in South Africa	22–23 October 2015
3. Skills Planning	29–30 September 2016
4. Enhancing the Implementation of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	12–13 September 2017
5. Radically Transforming Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges through Empirical Research	12–13 September 2018
6. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR): Implications for PSET	18–19 September 2019
7. Open Learning: Flexible and Blended Learning in PSET	22 September 2021

The 2021 Research Colloquium was preceded by a webinar series that focused on:

- Institutional Leadership and Management (7 September 2021);
- Lecturer Development and Open Educational Resources (OER) (9 September 2021);
- Opening Learning through a New Qualifications Perspective (14 September 2021);
- Flexible and Blended Teaching and Learning Practices in PSET (16 September 2021); and
- Inclusivity in PSET (20 September 2021).

PARTICIPATION

The 2021 Research Colloquium brought together 2,481 participants, including individuals and organisations from different sectors across education, business, skills and training associations, non-profit organisations, research institutions, and academic institutions. Categories of participants included the following:

- TVET Colleges;
- Universities;
- CET Colleges;
- Private Colleges;
- International and Continental Universities;
- International Organisations;
- SETAs;
- National and Provincial Government Departments;
- Religious Organisations;
- Schools;
- Quality Councils and Qualification Bodies;
- Non-Government Organisations /Non-Profit Organisations;
- State-Owned Enterprises;
- Professional Bodies;
- Research Organisations;
- Businesses;
- Academics; and
- Private Individuals.

COLLOQUIUM PROCEEDINGS: 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

Programme Director: Ms Trudi van Wyk, Acting Deputy Director-General (DDG), Planning, Policy and Strategy, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)

The Programme Director issued a special welcome to the Deputy Minister, Mr Buti Manamela, the Acting Director-General, (A/DG) Dr Phil Mjwara, and all international and local speakers.

The Programme Director provided a brief overview of some of the international speakers before she acknowledged the different format that the Research Colloquium had to follow due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID)-19 pandemic, i.e., a completely virtual event. She continued that five webinars preceded the event. It was also noted that all videos and presentations from the webinars had been uploaded on the Research Colloquium website (www.dhetresearchcolloquium.co.za). The focus of the Research Colloquium was then briefly outlined, and the programme for the day was presented before she handed over to Dr Mjwara, the Chairperson of Session One.

1. OPENING AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

1.1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chairperson: Dr Phil Mjwara, A/DG: DHET

The Chairperson thanked all the participants and speakers for their valued presence and contributions. He expressed that the DHET had an interest in the production, management, dissemination and utilisation of knowledge and insights that would help it to enhance its role in providing good quality Post-School Education and Training (PSET) for all. He added that in South Africa, quality research was a prerequisite for informed decision-making in areas of policy development, funding, and programme and qualification provision. The White Paper for PSET also emphasised the importance of research in contributing to the development of society.

The Chairperson expanded on how DHET was very involved in various fora to promote PSET and education as a whole and listed each forum and its role in promoting this cause. He outlined the various Research Colloquia that DHET had already hosted before introducing the theme for the 2021 Colloquium, which provided an opportunity for researchers to share new and emerging research on Open Learning principles concerning blended learning, online learning, flexible learning, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Open Educational Resources (OER), online assessment, and micro-credentials, and the implications of these for the PSET sector. He then listed the credentials of each speaker participating in Session One before handing over to Deputy Minister Buti Manamela for the Opening Remarks.

1.2. OPENING REMARKS

Mr Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister: Higher Education, Science and Innovation

The Deputy Minister welcomed delegates to the 2021 Research Colloquium. He mentioned how technology seemed to be the communication medium of the future before congratulating the organisers for taking up the challenge. He commented on the effect that COVID-19 had on the PSET system and how Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges had to move to emergency remote multi-modal teaching and learning.

He said that we had to think differently, apply different methodologies and technologies in our teaching and learning in order to be more effective in the current economic state, and we needed to be cost-effective in the ways we do things. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we had to close our institutions, and Universities and TVET Colleges had to move to emergency remote multi-modal teaching and learning. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) was integrated into teaching and learning, for most of the 2020 academic year.

The Deputy Minister raised a question on *what we have learnt from the pandemic, especially in how we conduct teaching and learning in our institutions?* He emphasised that we could not go back to the state we were in before the pandemic, and have to capitalise on what we have experienced and learnt, and apply it progressively in our institutions. The lockdown motivated the creation of virtual learning, the use of zero-rated applications and educational websites, introduced educational bundle rates for students to connect, and the sector switched to remote learning (online learning).

He continued that the South African education and training sector adopted different Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) tools to create a virtual learning system during the pandemic. The issue was whether the sector capitalised on this change of pedagogy in how we conduct teaching and learning. He noted that the Research Colloquium should address a very important question on how we could apply Open Learning principles and approaches in the PSET system, and how the barriers to learning could be removed.

He added that the integration of ICT into teaching and learning and the move to blended learning approaches were not new in South Africa. The use of digital and technological solutions in education and training has been up-fronted and fast-tracked for ensuring education and training continuity in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

He advised that when looking at digital and technological solutions, focus is required on the following six key areas outlined in the White Paper on e-Education:

- ICT Infrastructure;
- Connectivity;

- Digital Content;
- Capacity Building of Lecturers;
- Pedagogical and Technical Support to Lecturers and Students; and
- Research and Development.

He noted that connectivity, cost of data and devices were, as Prof Strydom said in the fourth webinar, “the trilogy of successful flexible and blended learning approaches”. They were the cornerstones of digital learning. With sound pedagogy, student support, and good teaching and learning resources, flexible and blended learning could be implemented in the PSET system. He then listed the various ways the DHET had worked towards this goal, highlighting that connectivity remained the biggest challenge.

He noted that a recent study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and Higher Health showed that South African institutions could adapt and engage with technologies to create a new way of offering teaching and learning. That did not mean that technology should replace teaching and learning, but it did imply that the sector was ready to embrace technology as an education enhancer.

In conclusion, the Deputy Minister recognised that teaching and learning interventions, especially when using ICT, must be planned with extreme care and a healthy dose of realism be maintained and supported. Furthermore, staff and students require meaningful access to technology and the ability to use it effectively, which is why it is important to provide sufficient and appropriate training in ICT skills and the pedagogy used in a remote context.

He closed by saying that the 2021 Research Colloquium was very important to those efforts made towards strengthening the PSET system, thereby making it more efficient and effective.

1.3. KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON RESEARCH IN OPEN LEARNING: LESSONS FOR A POST-COVID WORLD

Presenter: Prof Asha Singh Kanwar, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada

Prof Singh Kanwar introduced her topic that was prepared jointly with her colleague, Dr Sanjaya Mishra, who leads their work in technology-enabled learning. She started with an overview of the Commonwealth of Learning, based in Canada, then continued by highlighting the impact that COVID-19 has had on higher education. She noted that the biggest disruption had been the closure of campuses, where more than 220 million higher education students and 63 million teachers worldwide were affected. Most institutions had to pivot to emergency remote teaching, and many did not have adequate technology infrastructure. She added that the mobility of international students plummeted, with countries losing large revenues from student fees. Governments imposed budget cuts, and research suffered.

She continued that in schools, both teachers and students felt the impact of online teaching. Many faced technological challenges and most faced psychological issues. She presented statistics from worldwide, including South Africa, to outline the massive learning curve everyone faced. The pandemic had deepened the existing learning crisis.

The presenter then posed a question on how these inequalities and learning losses could be mitigated. She asked whether Open Learning could be the answer. She described the policies and practices that permitted entry into Open Learning with few barriers. The benefits of Open Learning were discussed, such as flexible hours and easier access to materials online.

She noted that in South Africa, in 2019, over 34% of students were enrolled in distance education, with 68% of students being female. But then, when these numbers were compared to the phenomenal increase in Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) enrolments, they could see that the scale that could be achieved through technology was even higher than what was traditionally achieved.

The presenter continued that during the pandemic, teachers needed access to quality digital content. She stated that there had been an increase in the use of OER, adding that research showed that there was no significant difference between distance and traditional classroom instruction in terms of learning outcomes. Yet, there was a lingering perception that distance education was not as effective as class-based education. In fact, some research showed that students in blended learning performed marginally better than those in the classroom.

She continued that about 15% of the world's population suffered from some form of disability. Yet, in some developing countries, less than one percent (1%) of persons with disabilities had access to higher education. Persons with disabilities preferred distance learning because it was convenient to study at their own pace, place, and time.

The presenter then asked how the carbon footprint of education could be reduced. This was one area that needed further research.

She concluded by looking at five issues that emerged during the pandemic and how these could be learned from transforming higher education:

- Purely online options did not work for everyone. The future will be a blend of online and in-person approaches using a range of technologies that are affordable, accessible, and available;
- As the pandemic pushes governments to reduce resource allocations, cost-effective solutions need to be looked at;
- There was a huge rise in self-directed learning during the pandemic, as seen from the phenomenal increases in MOOC enrolments;

- Formal assessments and proctoring systems suffered major setbacks during the pandemic, where institutions adopted innovative approaches to build flexible models and make assessments more authentic;
- To address the growing inequalities, governments and institutions needed to develop policies that addressed the needs of the last person in the queue. And these were usually women, girls, those in remote regions, and persons with disabilities.

She concluded that higher education must be strengthened going forward and that government policies and funding would be critical for research and expansion. Technology, infrastructure, and connectivity would be key in providing education that is affordable and accessible. Universities needed to align more closely with the needs of their societies and promote research that leads to sustainable development.

2. GLOBAL AND CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE

Chairperson: Mr Imraan Patel, DDG, Socio-Economic Innovation Partnerships, Department of Science and Innovation (DSI)

Mr Patel provided an overview of the Session, noting that there were three presentations in the Session followed by discussions at the end of all the presentations.

The first presenter was Professor Mpine Makoe.

2.1 LEADING CHANGE IN THE DIGITALISED HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Presenter: Prof Mpine Makoe, Chairholder, Commonwealth of Learning in OER/Open Educational Practices (OEP)

Prof Makoe explained that her presentation focused on leading change because learning institutions had found themselves on the cusp of many things taking place, such as trends were pushing them to change and many other issues.

She took the participants back to the nineteenth century. She presented a timeline that listed colonisation by various European countries and how South Africans had adopted the European education systems without one of their own once the colonisers had left. These brought about challenges that made it impossible for them to have an education system that addressed South African and African needs. In addition, there was sluggish economic growth because there were no skills and no expertise; any technological disruption hit very hard. However, South Africa continued to function without the technologies that is, until the pandemic hit, forcing everyone to work remotely. Suddenly, citizens had to rely on technology, and technology became one of the only delivery mechanisms they could use.

The presenter questioned that as we were attracting and using technology, what type of systems and structures were in place to ensure we were using it optimally. She argued that we need to embrace change and stop making excuses, such as poor ICT infrastructure or connectivity problems.

She continued that in Africa, we have a development agenda. There are growth plans, but social cohesion has been neglected. We need to focus on what we could do. It is rule-based work relations; we follow the rules, policies and state regulations guide us. We are married to our disciplines, and because of that, we are unable to experiment. For us to achieve teaching and learning outcomes, interventions are very critical. These have enabled more and more people to enter into higher education spaces, but institutions are not supporting them to succeed in higher education. She added that we needed to learn to work in teams to contribute to knowledge and strength. The networks of relationships is what is needed to advance higher education.

The presenter stated that innovation would thrive in open systems; they change rapidly. She explained how research worked in the education space and how this could benefit both lecturers and students. She advised that there was no way we could continue with education institutions without addressing the social injustices of the past. Otherwise, we would not achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of equity and equitable access to quality education. She stated that government had to create conditions for change as well. Most importantly, she argued that education was about people, and that people could not be ignored in the process.

In conclusion, she stated that it is government's responsibility to develop ICT infrastructure to ensure that every individual in the country has equitable access to connectivity. Government needs to come up with systems the same way that they did with research, where there were incentives for research. If we were to move away from the elitist type of higher education, we need to start focusing on teaching and learning and our role in the developing context.

She noted that education institutions must have a clear vision and strategy for digitalisation within higher education and university spaces because that is within their power. They need to provide training programmes for staff capacity to work in an open and digital environment.

2.2 DIGITAL CREDENTIALING IN HIGHER EDUCATION – WHAT AFRICA CAN LEARN FROM EUROPE?

Presenter: Mr Peter van der Hijden, Independent Higher Education Strategy Advisor, Belgium

Mr van der Hijden stated that the whole world was discovering the phenomenon of micro-credentials. He noted that they all talked about lifelong learning, but there was no demand, at least not in a structured manner. Education was in crisis. We

need to organise and adapt the way we work to legislation and funding mechanisms.

The presenter explored the different meanings of micro-credentials and everything it represented. He noted that it was a set of learning outcomes on the one side, and on the other, it was an official qualification. It was results from all learning that belonged to the individual. And if one could not find it, it did not exist. He stated that a list of reliable registers and catalogues were needed. In France, for example, each time one completed a course, their micro-credentials were updated. And employers could see these updated lists that one could use for work opportunities. It is an individual learning account. This is what is needed to be done:

- Create the big register by the government of all the learning programmes;
- Create a list micro-credentials for universities and TVET Colleges;
- Create a register of vouchers funding the individual learning curve; and
- Create a catalogue of learning assessment centres.

He concluded that if micro-credentials were developed transparently, they would serve both the citizens of Africa and other countries.

2.3 BLENDED LEARNING: STATE OF THE NATION - INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING INSIGHT PAPER

Presenter: Dr Ebba Ossiannilsson, Chair, ICDE OER Advocacy Committee (OERAC) and ICDE OER Ambassador for Global Advocacy, Sweden

Dr Ossiannilsson stated that it was important to always have the SDGs in mind when discussing blended learning and education. She noted that there was an SDG dedicated to education, which was also the background for her research report.

The presenter provided a background to her paper, her research material and how the SDGs impacted the pandemic. She added that the 4IR would change the way we learn, perform, communicate, relate, work and live.

The presenter called blended learning either hybrid learning, flipped learning or mixed-mode learning. She continued that experiences may vary widely in design and execution from place to place, country to country, and also by time, culture and context.

Blended learning required change. These changes are accompanied by shifts in ownership and empowerment, where students become collaborators and orchestrate their learning regarding time, place, path, settings and pace. Blended learning was about a mix of classroom models and online learning. A blended learning model had various components of virtual learning platforms and required project-based learning, technology integration, global connection, game-based

learning, direct instruction, peer to peer coaching, and focus on mastery. Blended learning required an open approach.

She noted that if we do not change the assessment procedures and structures, nothing else would change either, although we may still call it blended learning. Learning should be student-orientated, and this is a shift to a different dimension of learning.

The presenter then discussed the Horizon Report, its influence on her paper, and how learning was moving towards the digital age, spatial intelligence, learning analytics, and micro-credentials. There were also issues of health care, well-being and mental health of students.

She noted that higher education needed a holistic approach to succeed, with well-supported faculty dynamic learning environments. Leaders should have courage enough for a change towards blended learning and a change towards digital transformation. One recommendation from the research report was that success was always based on people; and how we invested in people and their resources because people are the most valuable resource. It is about capacity building; as well as incentives and trust. It is about involvement, engagement, and promoting the ownership of learning for the learners.

The presenter closed by addressing social cohesion, especially in higher education. The indigenous knowledge of all South Africans needs to form part of the curriculum. This is 'inclusivity'.

2.4 DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS TO ALL THE PRESENTERS	
QUESTION: How to enhance social cohesion?	ANSWER: Prof Makoe stated that the issue of enhancing social cohesion was something that South Africans needed to address. When looking at the Higher Education sector, this had not been addressed in terms of inequality. This has to be part of the curriculum, and this is also where inclusivity came in. If the issue of social cohesion was not addressed, we will continue to experience issues of #feesmustfall and #decolonisation. ANSWER: Mr Van Der Hijden stated that he appreciated the degrees, but they could open them up to more people. Teachers had so much to share from their research, but they were only sharing it with a few, and they should also provide

opportunities to learners, giving them the chance to teach and have these teachings recognised. Micro-credentials could be a game-changer for Africa and other continents.

ANSWER: Dr Ossiannilsson stated that it was time to rethink post the COVID-19 pandemic. Education has been focussing on the social dimensions and not so much about professional development. When we engage with all the stakeholders we should not leave the learners behind. We need to see learners as collaborators. It is a different approach for blended learning; we are used to campus education because it puts the learner at the centre again to take ownership for their learning.

QUESTION TO PROF MAKOE

QUESTION: How do people respond to digital initiatives, infrastructure and platforms that prioritise numbers, data rankings, hierarchical structure, centralisation, and focus on scaling rather than prioritising local needs?

ANSWER: The presenter noted that her presentation was about rethinking the whole system and how we were doing things. And part of rethinking the whole system was also to challenge what has been happening over the years. We need to see where these things were coming from. That was the reason why the presenter started with colonial and apartheid education systems. Without a clear vision of the higher education we want for South Africa, we would continue going after other people's visions. And when we go after other people's visions, we would not be able to address our development agenda.

CLOSING REMARKS

Prof Makoe

The presenter stated that lecturers were critical. One could not start any project or programme without empowering people who were supposed to be the drivers of change. It is important to train people who were working in the higher education space, and their training needed to be continuous, i.e. continuous professional development. Hence, micro-credentials are an important component of that, we are to continuously train people to adapt to new situations. We saw it during the COVID-19 pandemic, where suddenly, people were thrown into a digital space, and none of them were trained for digitalisation. This also spoke to issues of assessments. This was a different time of teaching

	and learning, and therefore we need to design for it. Academics were complaining about high workload; it is high workload because they were doing it in a parallel way; they continued to do what they had always done, and we wanted to add to this, and because it was new and took a lot of time to understand how it worked, they were going to dump it. The biggest concern is that we were going to miss an opportunity that COVID had given us, the space to begin to rethink and come up with solutions that worked in a digitalised space.
Mr Van Der Hijden	The presenter issued the challenge to get the ball rolling by publishing South Africa's criteria for micro-credentials (international, local and physical) and coming up with something different. Plagiarism was bad in education and research, but plagiarism was a good thing in policy. South Africa needed to take the lead on this.
Dr Ossiannilsson	The presenter stated that the world had changed since COVID-19. We need to take the opportunity and face the challenges because other challenges will come; for example, earthquakes, floods and so on, where we would have to adapt. She noted that one dimension she used to be concerned about was how to look at quality. We have quality on the agenda due to the pandemic, and that was very much about what the presentation was about, but also the health issues and social, ethical dimensions. There is a need to empower all people involved because they had the power, not the strategy nor the policy and the curricular. We need to involve all stakeholders to give them the power to be part of the change.

2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The provision of education is going to be digitalised. The COVID-19 pandemic provided the sector with an opportunity to reflect on what society had been doing and what was not working in a digital era. Government must put systems and structures in place to enable people to work in a digitalised environment.

Universities should have a vision and strategy for digitalisation; they must set up systems and structures to support Open Learning and provide staff training to work in an open and digital environment. There needs to be a focus on continuous professional development, and staff must be skilled enough to respond and adapt to new situations.

With open digital systems, universities can provide more students with access to education, and they need to ensure that they are supporting these students so that they could succeed.

We need to consider micro-credentials and how they could be implemented. Universities could make a list of the short learning micro-credentials that they are supportive of (including MOOCs, short courses and programmes). Universities should consider credits and waivers for students completing short courses.

3. OPEN LEARNING – FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED LEARNING – THE NEW NORMAL

Chairperson: Mr Randall Faulmann, Director: Open Learning, DHET

Mr Faulmann welcomed participants to Session Three. He provided background on the three speakers presenting in the Session and handed over to Prof Gerrit Stols.

3.1. TRANSFORMING POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS THROUGH BLENDED LEARNING – WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM COVID-19?

Presenter: Prof Gerrit Stols, Director of Education Innovation, University of Pretoria (UP)

Prof Stols stated that the level of pro-activeness of an institution was strongly associated with its ability to adapt and respond to a crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic presented the biggest test of the resilience of an institution in recent times. He mentioned four levels of pro-activeness:

- Inactive: no study guides available, no learning materials;
- Active: do things from day to day, waiting for students to ask for help;
- Basics are in place: study guides, learning materials, the Learning Management System (LMS) platform; and
- Discipline: anticipate and avoid problems by using information and data effectively.

He continued that a key component of any contingency plan involved shifting between different instruction modes without compromising the structure, quality, and student success. The time-space matrix described modes of learning: students could learn online or offline, synchronously, or asynchronously. The time-space matrix defined four possible modes of learning:

- The physical synchronous face to face classes;
- The virtual synchronous (Zoom) classes;
- The physical asynchronous, self-study or distance learning; and
- The virtual synchronous, the LMS, guided or online learning.

The most basic contingency plan in case of a disaster was the traditional distance learning model, which focused on self-study, but this required the fundamentals and

the basics to be in place. He described the University of Pretoria's (UP's) hybrid flip inquiry-based teaching methodology and how it was applied.

The presenter noted that data was one of the most powerful tools for lecturers to inform, engage and support students' success. UP was used as an example to explain this concept, and the presenter produced some statistics:

- 94.9% of undergraduate students used the LMS actively in the first week of remote learning;
- 5.6% of the respondents indicated that their limited computer literacy made online learning extremely challenging; and
- 2.8% of the lecturers indicated that their limited computer literacy made online teaching very challenging.

The data showed that most lecturers pre-recorded their classes, and 87% of the students watched the recordings of classes. About 72.3% of students indicated that they were participating in virtual study groups with fellow students. Many students liked the flexibility of remote teaching.

Unsurprisingly, many students did not prefer online teaching. For some students working from home was challenging; others complained about the increasing workload. Some missed human interaction.

It was clear from the data that remote teaching and learning environments had both advantages and disadvantages. The most significant changes focused on self-directed learning, online teaching using videos and recordings and data analytics, and the shift towards online and alternative assessment methods.

He closed by predicting that Artificial Intelligence (AI), data and chatbots will become more important. In summary, he noted that a key component of any future instructional plan or contingency plan involved a careful consideration of the advantages and the disadvantages of the different modes of restructuring. Future planning must last as it could compromise instructional quality or student success rates.

3.2. IS BLENDED LEARNING AND OPEN LEARNING TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN?

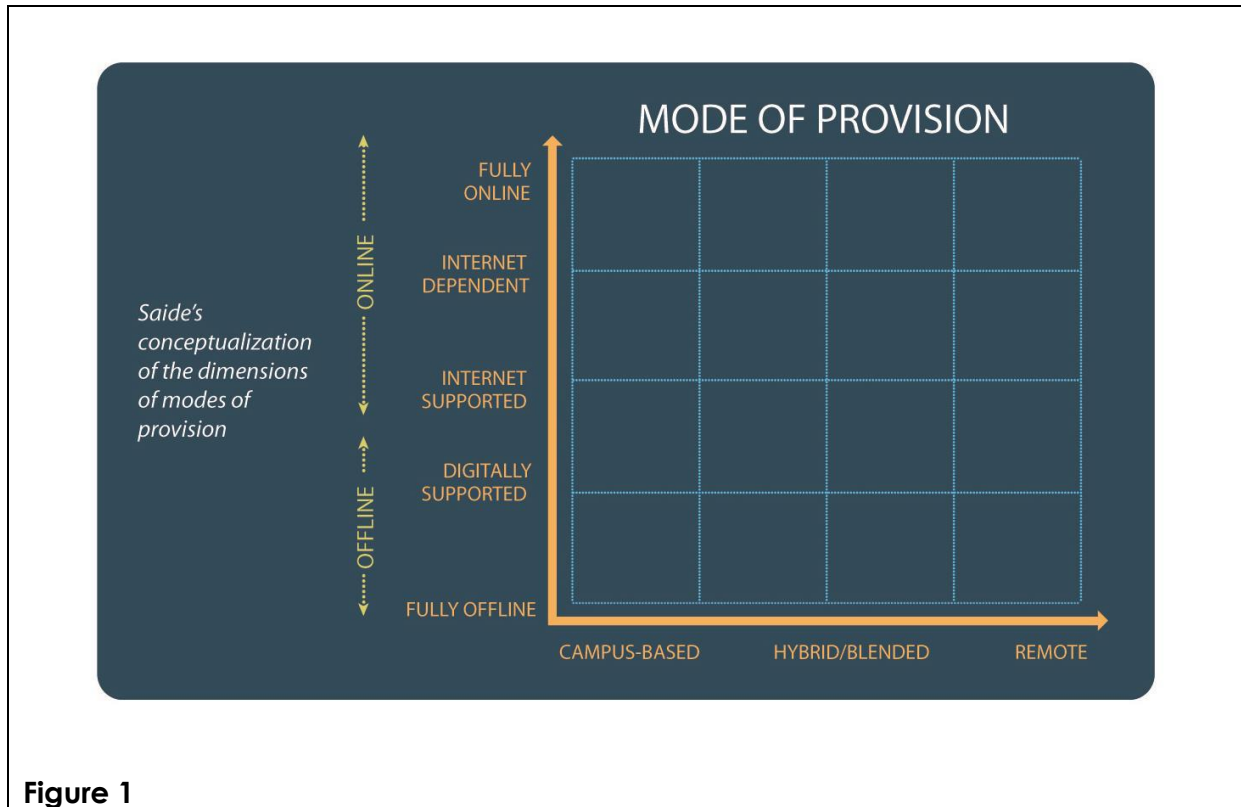
Presenter: Ms Jenny Glennie, Director of the South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE)

Ms Glennie noted that her presentation would address the following three questions:

- What is Open Learning? What is online learning?
- How are they related?
- How can we benefit from this relationship?

The presenter delved into the origins of Open Learning and linked it to South African history. The principles highlighted the tension between enabling access and adequately providing for success; between being flexible yet providing enough structured support. She then cited an article where online learning was defined as any form of learning conducted partly or wholly over the internet.

The presenter spoke about the following grid:



In Figure 1, the horizontal axis shows where learning occurs, and the vertical axis shows the technology used. South Africa has a long remote learning experience through the University of South Africa (UNISA) with over 300,000 students, most of whom were studying remotely. There are additional universities offering tertiary education through distance learning. These are on the horizontal axis. Almost all education was digitally supported to being internet supported, internet dependent, and then fully online. This was on the vertical axis. She explained where were on the grid before the pandemic and where were now.

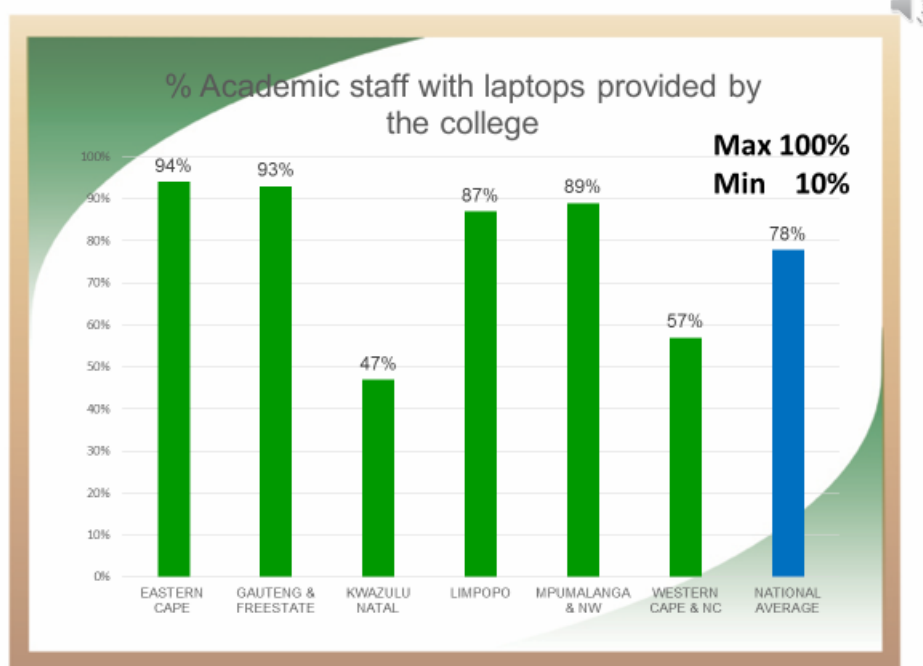
The presenter moved on to quality assurance and how universities had become more deliberate in their transformational process to ensure the instructional content was student centred, aligned with programmatic learning outcomes, providing access to all learners, and effectively designed and delivered. We had seen that during the COVID-19 pandemic; the opportunity was offered, but students were unable to take advantage of that offer due to connectivity and location challenges, device problems, and a range of other reasons. She raised several questions that allowed researchers to say whether they had created a fair chance of success for all. Learners should be moving through the system and using their qualifications and knowledge.

Online learning should allow everyone to achieve success. Institutions grappled with converting thousands of courses from traditional to digital formats in a very compressed timeframe. It could be done, and the presenter suggested that they ensure their Open Learning principles were truly appropriate for the South African context.

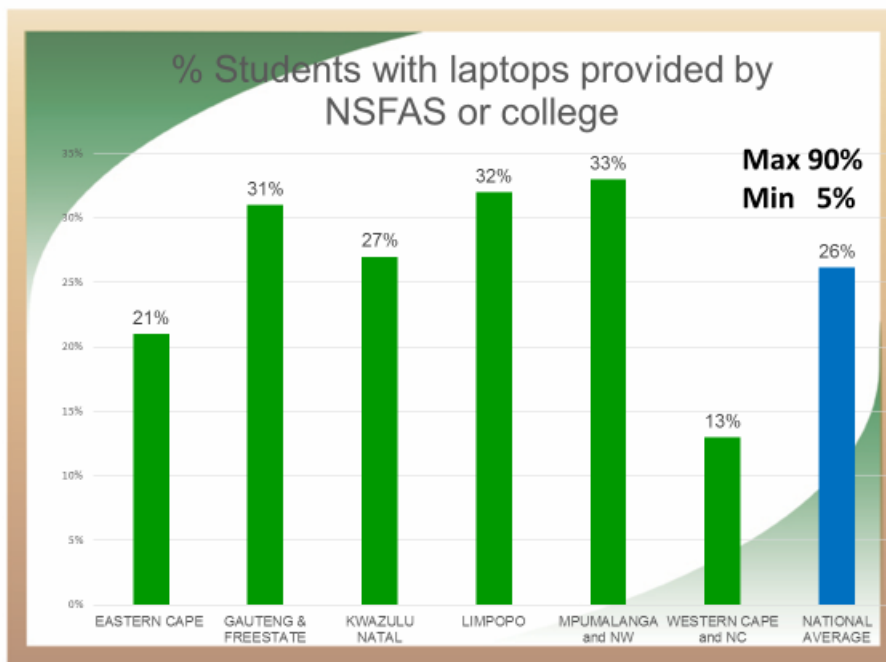
3.3. HOW ARE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES RESPONDING TO OPEN LEARNING – IS BLENDED LEARNING THE ANSWER?

Presenter: Dr Nick Balkrishen, Regional Manager, Mpumalanga and North-West TVET and Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges

Dr Balkrishen noted that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated blended learning initiatives in many colleges, which the presenter regarded as the integration of different modes of teaching and learning. He collected data from 49 of the 50 TVET Colleges. He suggested that while there was steady progress in the use of blended learning by TVET Colleges, there was also great variance between the colleges' data. Once the data was collected and analysed, it was collapsed into six regions, with averages per region by category. Analysis revealed that in two regions, 90% of lecturers had laptops.



However, in six regions, between 21% to 33% of students had National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or college-sponsored devices.



These relatively low percentages were expected, though, as the NSFAS laptop initiative had only commenced in 2021, and the delivery of laptops was continuing.

He provided additional findings, such as the percentage of staff trained in blended learning, percentage of academic staff who had access to connectivity on campus, and so on.

Several initiatives were also introduced, such as the TVET College connectivity project, which entailed the provision of high-speed connectivity to over 300 sites.

In conclusion, the presenter said that the data suggested that blended learning initiatives at TVET Colleges were growing rapidly from almost 0% in 2018 to 47% in 2021. The variance between blended learning initiatives was extremely high, with a minimum of 5% at one college and 100% at another. This variance created an opportunity for colleges to partner with each other and improved blended learning initiatives. Several colleges had developed very innovative solutions. Blended learning had the potential to ensure that learning was vibrant and enthralling.

Consequently, student performance could improve dramatically due to the massive costs of building new infrastructure to improve student access. Remote learning opens the possibility of increasing access with relatively low costs, although the start-up costs may be high in the short term. A South African student from a poor home in a rural area should not be punished for being poor or being born in a rural area. Blended learning could play a pivotal role in ensuring that these students also have access to the best lessons by the best lecturers. Blended learning was not a choice anymore, but it was an imperative. The institutions, students, and staff deserve nothing less.

3.4. DISCUSSION

QUESTION TO PROF STOLS

QUESTION: How important is selecting or identifying appropriate technologies in implementing blended learning in institutions?

ANSWER: Prof Stols responded that any technology was secondary to pedagogy; they should first decide on pedagogy, and the technology must support the pedagogy. Some institutions first see what is available and what kind of technologies they could use. He suggested just the opposite. First, decide on the teaching and learning strategies and then search for technologies that support those pedagogical strategies.

QUESTION: What can be done to ensure that all lecturers have a real-world experience in the subjects they lecture?

ANSWER: Prof Stols did not think that it was a simple answer, but he thought it was very important. He thought it was easier to say: what can we do so that students have a real-world experience in terms of community engagement work and integrated learning. We could for example, invite guest speakers from the real world to address the classes. He referred to the lecturers, and how difficult it is to ensure that they have real-world experience, which was complex.

QUESTION TO DR BALKRISHEN

QUESTION: Is blended learning the new approach to teaching and learning after the COVID pandemic?

ANSWER: Dr Balkrishen stated that in his view, technology excited young people. We need to look at the ways to optimally use the passion of the youth in the blended learning approach. And not only because of COVID-19 but going forward as well. A combination of face to face and online lessons could be a realistic start. He was glad where Prof Singh Kanwar shared some data on how well-designed online lessons could also improve success. Blended learning could provide them with some of those answers.

QUESTION: What can be done to ensure that all lecturers have a real-world experience in the subjects they lecture?

ANSWER: Dr Balkrishen stated that experiences for lecturers were strategically important because it allowed them to relate to what they were teaching to the actual world of work. He continued that it was a challenge in the TVET space, but they had placed it on the strategic plan of colleges, where targets had been set for workplace experience for lecturers. One of the ways they suggest this could

happen at a faster rate is for colleges to build partnerships with employers and then be able to place the lecturers there for a short space of time. He thought that with those few incentives that are coming along, they should be able to achieve this target soon.

QUESTION TO MS GLENNIE

QUESTION: Are all lecturers adequately equipped to teach in a blended learning environment?

ANSWER: Ms Glennie responded that she was afraid the answer was no. It was quite a change for many lecturers to move into the blended model. And she thought it did require them to think much more holistically about how they designed the learning opportunity they were creating. She referred to what Prof Singh Kanwar spoke about, a well-designed blended learning opportunity. It did take more thought, more preparation, and a very strong attempt to engage learners while they were not present with the lecturer. She thought it also lays bare what had often been happening, as one of the speakers alluded to, which was 'let's do away with reading from the textbook'. One could not get away with reading the textbook. But she did not think it was an impossible chasm to leap; it was something that many lecturers would embrace. In a way, it is also created some momentum for lecturers to say, 'well, goodness, I have done something different. Now let me rethink my teaching and learning approach a little.' She stated that OER provided a good opportunity for students to prepare in advance for their participation in a class by reading appropriately chosen learning resources. And then, one could use the engagement process to engage with that content rather than simply listen to the content.

CLOSING REMARKS

Ms Glennie

The presenter thought we were at a very important moment, adding that we should not want to return to the old normal. She added that we had the motivation to seriously think about how we could pivot much more quickly than might otherwise have pivoted to the appropriate use of technology in the pedagogical experience. The technology must not lead to pedagogy but should be the other way around. Given that DHET had also been

	<p>so positive in responding to this challenge, now is the time that they could ensure that they construct good learning opportunities, make use of the technology that they had available, and with the knowledge that increasingly both staff and students have access to devices. We should not waste the opportunity and must ensure that we design what Prof Singh Kanwar referred to as quality online learning experiences. We have a long history of students not completing their qualifications in distance education environments, and we need to improve on this.</p>
<p>Dr Balkrishen</p>	<p>The presenter noted that they had visionary leadership at the Department together with the Minister. Just as textbooks were essential in the past, gadgets such as laptops and tablets, in his view, will become mandatory for TVET students, together with access to data. In the chat conversations, he had noticed that delegates were speaking about capacity building. This was critically important for both management and staff in blended learning. It was essential for the successful rollout of blended learning, and we need to have the buy-in of all of the stakeholders. One of the things the Deputy Minister indicated was that we needed to focus on students and to do things more effectively using technology, and blended learning did exactly that. We also need to capitalise on the strength of both face to face learning and online engagements. This could result in enriched learning for students and even for administrative staff. The workload relief for academic staff will also come into play, although he felt that blended learning was not the silver bullet for all the challenges. The effective use of technology could augment teaching modalities, and there was no one size fits all, face to face lessons to play a critical role. In the TVET sector, they had the practical component that could not be done online, so face to face did have a role to play. We need to use technology to enhance how we do these things in a blended way.</p>
<p>Prof Stols</p>	<p>The presenter stated that although they were all very excited about technology, it is also important to emphasise the human factor. A sense of belonging and immediacy was important for the</p>

	students; belonging was essential to academic success and student well-being because the presenter saw student well-being as being problematic during the online teaching period.
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3.5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS

TVET Colleges could play a role in the development of digital content. TVET Colleges need to work collaboratively with each other and partner with stakeholders to develop digital content.

The Department needs to strengthen collaboration efforts with employers so that there is continuous workplace exposure for lecturers.

There is a need to ensure that lecturers are continuously developed and capacitated so that they are adequately equipped to teach in a blended learning environment. Furthermore, there needs to be engagement and buy-in across the sector to successfully implement blended learning.

4. WEBINAR PROCEEDINGS

4.1. WEBINAR 1: INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1.1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/ DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET

Ms van Wyk welcomed participants to the first series of webinars on Open Learning, Flexible and Blended Learning in PSET and explained the purpose of the research undertaken by the UCT.

The research was funded by the EU for the UCT to undertake 16 case studies on Open Learning. Each case study had a different theme.

The webinar would present four case studies, research was done both nationally and internationally and was part of the COOL project.

Ms van Wyk was encouraged by the interest shown in the webinars since COVID-19 had taught everyone to use technology more innovatively.

Ms van Wyk introduced Mr Matias Matias, Senior Manager from Hewlett Packard (HP) in the United States of America (USA), to provide the Keynote Address.

4.1.2. KEYNOTE ON INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Presenter: Mr Matias Matias, Global Education Specialist, Advisory Board Member for HP Foundation, HP Life Program HP Inc.

Mr Matias began by explaining his passion and love for Africa before he commenced with his presentation. He shared several experiences seen from the HP side, things that went right and things that went wrong. He then acknowledged the importance of the work being done and presented his thoughts on influencing planning and policy development. He shared thoughts and ideas of what has been happening in Open Learning, especially concerning higher education.

He started with the question: Why does technology come first? He explained how at HP, technology was used to empower and enable people to be amazing. How did this translate into education? At HP, the impact of what they did was important, and the way they deployed and brought technology to the markets. Education played a major role in what they called digital equity under their community pillar.

The HP team had two major goals. The first one was that by 2025, they wanted to provide the tools, path, framework, knowledge, and infrastructure to provide better learning outcomes for 100 million people. They wanted to help improve human capital development. Secondly, they were committed to enabling better learning outcomes and accelerating digital equity, regardless of social condition or social status.

Three components were needed to design human capital development:

- The people who participate;

- The goals set and challenges faced – there was not a one size fits all approach; and
- Bringing education to everybody, everywhere and every time.

So, how was all this put together?

Step 1 was to move from content-centric learning to people-centric teaching. The focus should be on the human capital, which are the students. Step 2 was to empower teachers to deliver the right mode of instruction.

The key was to throw everything away that they had seen in schools and colleges and move from a very efficient model designed for the industrial age to what they called the 'experience age'. Mr Matias explained this move using a simple example of a school system that had been through a transformation called: 'Reinvent the classroom'.

The skill sets the students needed, and the role of technology was essential. If the focus was on active learning, they needed to ensure that the right tool is selected for the job every time and everywhere. The number one challenge that everybody faced was that there was not enough funding to make an impact, bring the best return on investment, and make the project sustainable in the long term. The second challenge was to make it relevant. The third challenge was that schools worked in silos, so it was very difficult to work together and develop and execute strategic plans. Mr Matias then presented examples of how HP had helped education systems worldwide navigate these challenges, including South Africa, and how they had learned to improve each time. HP's strategy was to establish strategic planning. Then they redesigned the learning experiences. They brought teachers on board and made them part of the transformation and developed the right skills sets.

Mr Matias indicated that he was enthusiastic about starting working with the DHET to identify the areas in which they could design solutions together, invent new learning experiences, incorporate new modalities through blended learning, and ensure that Open Learning and online learning is an asset. He encouraged everyone to take risks, ask big questions, and not be afraid of making mistakes – they learn from them. His message was: "Let's dream together. Let's do it together. And challenge us to find solutions for problems."

4.1.3. INNOVATIVE CULTURE – PRACTICES AND SHARED BELIEFS ABOUT PRACTICES FOR OPENING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND EFFECTING SOCIAL JUSTICE - FALSE BAY TVET COLLEGE

Understanding the TVET Game: Maximising Available Opportunities for Open Education Practices within the Broader TVET Field

Presenter: Dr Sara Black, Teacher, Analyst and Researcher, UJ

Dr Sarah Black began by introducing herself and provided a brief background on her research topic.

She explained that the original mandate for this case was that False Bay TVET College somehow exhibited what was phrased as a counterculture, i.e. some kind of ability to produce good results despite adverse conditions. That was not evident, at least from the DHET's perspective, at other TVET Colleges. What was happening at False Bay? And how could they understand what was being done there to learn from it? Dr Black went through the concerns that informed her approach to the research and the conditions at False Bay that brought them success. She said that the entire case was framed around the idea of something called social justice, which is what they want education institutions to be doing, enabling people to live flourishing lives in multiple ways. How had these conditions been produced at the college? And how were they reproduced or sustained?

Dr Black began with three major literature sets, including a source for field theory, which she hoped would bring a unique aspect to her research. She then interviewed the False Bay TVET College management, academic management and decision-makers. She did desktop research regarding False Bay results and how they stood with the department and other colleges. She surveyed 36 lecturers.

She found that False Bay TVET College navigated the TVET system extremely well; they produced results and did so consistently. Not only that, they managed to introduce interventions and supported their students in novel ways. She then explained how other colleges could follow in their footsteps. False Bay TVET College shared a lot of information across departments and campuses and appreciated that it was not just what one knows but also who one knows that matters. They had extensive infrastructure development and maintenance plans in place to ensure that the rooms and spaces they had were fit for use for their students and lecturers. And they found interesting ways to fund their vision.

In terms of recommendations, Dr Black said that the conditions that support Open Learning, whether that was inclusive practices for students with different abilities, whether that was the use of technology to facilitate the flexibility of learning or improve recruitment processes, or literacy support, were the same conditions that support basic institutional health, i.e. its stability, its planning horizons moving forward, it has sufficient flexibility to move resources where they are needed in the event of unforeseen circumstances or something that the college did not anticipate. It is calculated risk-taking and understanding the key performance factors used to construct the idea of success.

If 'success' is defined in narrow terms, we may miss something important. We need to broaden the definition of what constitutes success and realise how context shapes decision-making and institutions.

4.1.4. INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP IN OPEN LEARNING IN TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES – GERT SIBANDE TVET COLLEGE

Enabling Open Learning through Increased e-Learning: The Case of TVET Leadership at Gert Sibande TVET College

Presenter: Mukhtar Raban, Lecturer, NMU

Mr Mukhtar Raban's presentation looked at innovative leadership for e-Learning at Gert Sibande TVET College. He started his presentation with a brief background and some facts about e-Learning before the COVID-19 pandemic, as it was already on an upward trajectory before being forced into being the primary mode of learning. He outlined challenges the TVET sector was facing and said that within the draft framework, it was possible that Open Learning could be realised via e-Learning. College leadership played a significant role in determining how Open Learning principles were taken up.

Mr Raban then looked at some literature that spoke to the key concepts of the study, at leadership in TVET Colleges, and explored the concept of social justice. He highlighted four principles that spoke to the nature of the study:

- Learning processes in Open Learning needed to focus on the learners and contexts of learning;
- Learning provision had to be flexible;
- Learners needed to have increased access to learning opportunities; and
- It was also critical that providers create the conditions for a fair chance of learner success through learner support, with contextually appropriate resources, and sound pedagogical practices.

He delved into leadership in the TVET sector. Literature abounded on educational leadership, but not much addressed the specific context of South African TVET College leadership, focusing on increasing Open Learning opportunities through e-Learning. The final area he looked at was social justice. When they looked at how the DHET views Open Learning, focusing on the access, learning flexibility, student success, and removal of barriers of fee changes for success, they undeniably could deduce that Open Learning had an implicit social justice intent. He cited Nancy Fraser and how she conceived social justice as parity of participation.

Some of the study's findings were that, several processes were followed by the college leadership in the development of a vision for e-Learning. They found that the college conducted a contextual analysis, evaluating the context within which the college existed and was operating. The college leadership drew on global trends to benchmark what could occur when e-Learning was proliferated and promoted that e-Learning form part of an ICT mediated learning and teaching approach. The college looked at what was happening abroad, and they considered that, and they contextualised it for their application.

Mr Raban summarised his findings by saying the research could argue the leadership approaches Gert Sibande TVET College employed to advance ICT mediated learning, aligned to distributed and visionary leadership, with traces to socially just leadership. There was a perspective that some of the lecturers never felt completely included in enacting the vision. As a result, those lecturers felt they never had complete political representation and inclusion from a social justice perspective. Economically, the college leadership prioritised devices for staff, but many students still needed devices to access online learning. From a cultural perspective, students in surrounding communities were recognised in the processes of envisioning. However, misrecognition occurred with some lecturers who felt they required additional pedagogical support.

In conclusion, the study highlighted that the leadership processes and practices and strategies employed at Gert Sibande TVET College were to a certain degree underpinned by social justice principles. The study provided other TVET Colleges with a model of what could be followed to develop a vision for e-Learning and Open Learning and enact such a vision with a particular focus on students and staff and how this vision could be inclusive.

4.1.5. OPEN LEARNING ENABLING PARITY OF PARTICIPATION OF POOR AND FINANCIALLY PRECARIOUS STUDENTS - UWC

Preserving Access to Higher Education through Institutional Fund-Raising Initiatives

Presenter: Ms Susan Gredley, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) candidate, UWC

Ms Susan Gredley introduced herself and provided a brief background. She explained her passion for ensuring education is a key driver for lifting people out of poverty and promoting longer, healthier and happier lives for individuals and broader society. She outlined the challenges faced by many of the students in South Africa who come from a background of poor schooling and poverty and highlighted the depth, range and complexity of resource constraints for black students in higher education.

The methodology for the study took a qualitative approach. Data collection took place in 2020, and she conducted online in-depth interviews with three senior managers involved in fundraising activities and one academic staff member. Ms Gredley provided background on the research site, the UWC, which was known as a historically disadvantaged institution and catered largely to working-class and financially insecure students. She discussed fundraising initiatives such as the successful phonathon that took place in 2015-2016, staff fundraising campaigns and nutrition programmes. These innovative initiatives were by the students, for the students. Fundraising was challenging for institutions, particularly those with fewer and constrained resources.

Ms Gredley's recommendation was that institutions need to be aware of institutional context, history and culture, and the affordances and challenges of these offers. There needs to be an awareness of the complexity of the challenges facing students

and institutions and what was required to overcome these. More students should be offered access to this real-world learning and development opportunity. This was challenging, and government investments could pay dividends in multiple ways. And finally, leadership came through quite strongly as an enabler of fundraising initiatives and needed to be tackled intentionally. Specific coaching was needed that would pay dividends.

This case study showed that significant and sustained funding was needed for PSET institutions and students, and institutional fundraising should be the cherry on top.

4.1.6. WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL) 'OPENING UP' THE WORKPLACE AS A SITE OF LEARNING

Presenter: Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj Lecturer, UJ

Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj began by stating that TVET Colleges play an important role in developing any country. Its purpose is to improve the knowledge and enhance skills development in individuals to meet the current market needs and thereby increase employability and improved quality of life. Education is an opportunity to mitigate poverty. She outlined the complex problems facing these colleges, especially the training of new and ongoing development of current lecturers. She also discussed the high levels of unemployment, unskilled workforce and inequalities amongst people in South Africa.

TVET Colleges provided skills, and they offered an opportunity for human resource development and played an essential role in securing assets for South Africa, assets such as social development, cohesion, and improved economy and quality of life. This ultimately led to the research question on how their WIL practices could be designed to open the workplace at the site of professional and continuous development.

Dr Dhurumraj then looked at some of the key challenges before moving on to the methodology. Individual colleges needed to liaise with each other and how they could do that. Even though there was an intent to have equal opportunity, and to have collaborative linkages, sometimes such linkages and such practice may unwittingly undermine what had been phrased as parity of participation. The nature of the study was descriptive and exploratory. Therefore, the researcher opted for a qualitative research design. Data collection was confined to remote interviews with three participants. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Dr Dhurumraj mentioned the Swiss South African collaborative Initiative, and the German partnership, the latter catering for lecturer capacity building, which began in 2020. However, many participants were reluctant to engage in these programmes if they happened over the holidays or on weekends. They wanted to be paid to attend. When there were international development opportunities, participants were ever readily and easily excited because they had the opportunity to travel to learn. It provided a form of motivation. However, these pilot programmes attracted a lot of funding, but they just stopped at some point and the impact could not be proved. As

a result, many colleges engaged in different programmes that was available. This, to some extent, did not allow for standardisation. Dr Dhurumraj suggested that continuing existing partnerships needed to be in place, and it should become an integral process for electoral development.

The actual cost of further education and development was not the obstacle. The opportunity and cost of time was the obstacle that was evident from this study.

4.1.7. DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS TO MR MATIAS	
<p>QUESTION: What significant teaching and learning benefits of blended learning approaches could be achieved with supportive leadership?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that they should support leaders who were willing to focus on identifying what changes and support are required, ensure the well-being of everybody that was going to be participating in that project, and deliver high standards of performance. The focus was on productive relationships, trying to always see the big picture, put proper prioritisation on it, empower, inspire their teams, communicate clearly and effectively, accept mistakes on the path of growth, and always be accessible.</p> <p>The biggest benefit to teaching and learning is when supportive leaders are in place; everyone becomes part of the solution. One is not just going to be a recipient of it; one is part of finding the solution contributing to it; one's creativity and contribution are key components of success. Everybody here plays a major role. Why? Because one cannot make decisions based on opinions, it has to be reliable in relevant research data. It is key for policy, strategy, planning and practice development; which strategy will be implemented, and how will one get that done? This will be a very difficult test to accomplish, so the wish is to implement and train leaders to adopt strategies that supportive leaders deploy globally.</p>
<p>QUESTION: The experience age classroom looked amazing, but will it work in a</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that the answer was yes. There was no simple process because it was so easy to deploy technology; it was much more a change management project than just</p>

<p>system that was made for massification?</p>	<p>technology deployment. For them to deliver technology was very easy.</p> <p>They train and upskill the teachers, so they will have the right skill sets to bring those amazing learning experiences, and that was going to be aligned with their strategic vision and mission. And again, technology was going to be step one in the process.</p>
<p>QUESTION: How did the researchers know that the right tools were for the classroom without removing the tangible age-old techniques and tools of learning in a classroom environment?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that the key to finding the right answer was to get all the stakeholders involved. Even for different campuses, some of the campuses were going to have better connectivity than others. If they had students who worked in a very remote area, Long-Term Evolution (LTE) connections would probably be important. They must provide different ways to be well connected to that experience, which could be completely different from those that might be well met on a completely connected campus. It is not the technology that is there; it is the environment, the goals, the needs, and the challenges that will need the right technology for that solution. There is no one size fits all.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Infrastructure support and extra support for students with disabilities is still lacking immensely. Understanding the individual needs of disabled students is still a big challenge. What did the researcher do in terms of disability when he looked at support to disabled students?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that part of their 2030 goal for 150 million people was to bring equity to all those demographic groups. And this was something that they realised that they could not do by themselves. They did not know the answers for all the disabilities if they focused on that particular group. They do not know all the solutions for them. By bringing different stakeholders into it, they could together design the right experiences for them. A few years ago, they decided to bring a technology called the sprout. They were bringing immersive technologies to allow people who had never touched a computer to bridge that gap between the physical and the virtual world. And it did not matter if they were a completely able person or disabled person; the way they used the technology were the same. The technology adapted to the user as they configured with it; some of their ecosystem partners in Microsoft and Google had huge investments in facilitating the</p>

interface with different demographics. Thus, depending on the challenge they were facing, they needed to work together to find that solution. They might be using a larger screen, or louder speakers, or other solutions that they might look for. They need to look to find the right solution for them. They have a lot of partners that are focusing on those demographics, and they will be more than glad to bring them to fruition and make sure that they could implement them for their market as well.

QUESTION TO MS GREDDY

QUESTION: The delegate noted that she had looked at strategies deployed in other institutions in the presenter's literature review. She asked the presenter to give more examples of different strategies used in other institutions?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that she did not look extensively at what other institutions did in her research findings. What she looked at was what other kinds of offerings were out there from organisations and what she found was that there were some bursaries and kinds of private offerings such as the Allen Gray Fund; Phoenix, a crowdsourcing platform etc. She noted that this was discussed in the written paper. But these opportunities were quite limited, and they tended to be targeted at students who had quite specific aims. They might be looking to develop leadership skills, or it might be connected to a kind of discipline. What she did not explore to a great extent was what other Alumni Associations were doing. She focused on what UWC's Alumni Association was doing. What she looked at was quite novel in South Africa. There is not a lot that has been written about it to date.

QUESTION TO DR BLACK

QUESTION: Based on the outcomes of the case study, what False Bay TVET College will lecturers require for future learning and support, or the leadership to take them to the next level?

ANSWER: The presenter thought it was a useful question because it illustrated something she was trying to emphasise through the case study and presentation. What did they mean by the next level? What constituted the next level was not something that they pulled out of thin air. Perhaps for the college, it was what they considered the next level now, but in a year's time, three years, or even five years, what did they want their colleges to achieve? And what kinds of changes did they

need to adapt to? The presenter asked participants what is meant when they use a term like the next level. What is meant by improvement must depend on their vision for their future. If they envision their future to be one that pursues efficiency above all else, they are going to reach limits on that goal, but if by the next level they mean, for example, students getting better early childhood and Grade 9 results, so that when they arrive at TVET Colleges, the lecturers are able to do their work efficiently, then that was a different kind of question. When they say what kind of feature learning and support False Bay TVET College lecturers require to take them to the next level, it depends on what they mean by the next level. What False Bay did was create conditions to respond to change, whatever that change direction might be.

QUESTION TO DR DHURUMRAJ

QUESTION: Should lecturer development be included as part of the academic work allocation onto a timetable to ensure students' continuous personal development and supervision in a block release type model or approach?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that it would be a fantastic opportunity to be endorsed and incorporated because they were in a changing time. The pandemic had proven to them that what worked two years ago, sadly, may not work at this stage. They needed to be open to such opportunities and such problems. And yes, that would benefit a teacher or a TVET lecturer. She, as a lecturer, engaged in all types of opportunities and development that came along and were available to her because they were so used to the context space that the transition to the blended approach and remote virtual space was a challenge for her a few months ago. But she could see she had transitioned so nicely into the space because of the development engagement, so that would be a fantastic opportunity.

QUESTION TO MR RABAN

QUESTION: How can e-Learning navigate the problem of cultural

ANSWER: The presenter stated that there needed to be an increase in the processes and platforms facilitating cultural recognition. Institutions needed to have processes, platforms, strategies

recognition as an aspect of social justice?

and ways to possibly determine the linguistic backgrounds of their students to appreciate and understand the digital readiness to learn online. Those are some of the areas that need to be considered as part of cultural recognition because they often rolled out e-Learning or blended learning without considering these vital areas. In terms of the LMS, there should be a shift away from the Anglo-centric English-only interface because this contradicted cultural recognition. If students come from varying linguistic backgrounds, the system within which students learn is needed to accommodate this, perpetuating cultural injustice. There needs to be mechanisms for multilingualism to accommodate linguistic backgrounds in the content. The way in which it is delivered had to be looked at. Those were some of the areas needed to be addressed from a social justice perspective within the framing of e-Learning.

QUESTIONS TO DR BLACK

QUESTION: Did the presenter consider the environments with False Bay TVET College operating concerning the choice of leadership and management styles and success?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that the environment and its relationship to the types of strategies that False Bay leadership and management take was precisely the point; it was a dialogue between the two, and that is what False Bay did; they could not compare other institutions to do what False Bay did because they operated in a different environment. And they must recognise their definition of what constitutes success must be contextually embedded. Because otherwise, they are looking for that universal best practice when decades of research said it did not exist. They rather needed to be saying what constitutes a good decision in this place at this time.

QUESTION: What did the presenter think about the importance of visionary leadership in funding approaches in an organisation?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that leadership was emphasised as an important enabler in the fundraising endeavours in her case study. And she thought that the kinds of leadership valued were closely connected to participants' understandings of what UWC as an institution itself represented. The kinds of leadership qualities that were valued and said to enable successful

fundraising endeavours were the hierarchical approach and trusting leadership. One participant told her that she had absolute trust from her manager, and that she was allowed to go out and be creative and be innovative and take risks, and that she knew she had the full support and backing of her manager. A leader was a manager of someone trying to enact innovative leadership and needed to be someone who opened doors, helped with fundraising themselves for the department, and helped with the networking within the institution to enable people below to do the work. It did come across as very important in this study.

QUESTIONS TO ALL THE PRESENTERS

QUESTION: Are TVET Colleges ready for the 4IR; especially in terms of infrastructure, with no vision from management. What can they do to address the issue if colleges were not ready?

ANSWER FROM MR RABAN: The presenter stated that when looking at Dr Black's presentation and his case study, what has emerged was that colleges operate within a context; not all colleges have the same amount of resources. They do not have the same leadership temperament and styles and approaches being followed. He noted that he could speak from his case study that at Gert Sibande TVET College, the study found that the leadership was extensively vision-driven for a period of time, even with a leadership change. The college went through three college principals, each prioritised e-Learning. That naturally affected the culture fostered within the college. From the case study he conducted, he would say, perhaps, that the college was on a better footing from a leadership perspective for e-Learning, which might not be the same for other colleges. It is context-driven. Resources played a significant role. If resources are not provided or if the college does not prioritise that over a period, they might not necessarily be able to roll out e-Learning, blended learning, or Open Learning more broadly.

DR BLACK

ANSWER: The presenter elaborated on what Mr Raban had quite rightly identified as the importance of understanding college situations; they must be wary. She argued that digital learning or e-Learning was the end in and of itself,

	<p>rather than a means to an end. What were education institutions for? They were for imparting knowledge, learning opportunities and growth opportunities that enriched the students, and probably the lecturers at the same time, not just toward narrow economic ends, but towards a broader ideal of human flourishing, to have a great sense of self, a sense of participating in the world, a curiosity, confidence, etc. If digital learning-enabled that, it was fantastic. But there were other ways to achieve that as well. And she thought it was quite narrowly viewed if we assumed that digital learning was the only way to enact these things. We have done it in other ways for many, many years. We need to rather see technology as a tool. And like any tool, we use it when it is appropriate to use it. But if you have a hammer, you cannot run around thinking every problem is a nail. She asked participants to consider the idea of using technology in education instead of education being used by technology. She reminded participants where the decision-making process sits, with the person, and not the tool.</p>
<p>CLOSING REMARKS</p>	
<p>Dr BLACK</p>	<p>The presenter stated that she would like to leave the participants with the sense that they must remember that the tail must not wag the dog, that whatever technology they used, whether it was old school printing, whether it was radio, whether it was digital technology, whether it was live webinars, whether it was Wi-Fi, or just simple pen and paper, the decisions they made relied on them being conscious of their environment, on the goals they were trying to achieve, and what was appropriate to their purpose and the particular aim that they wanted to achieve, whether that is an individual or an institution. The researchers did not need to look to the high flyers or the most successful people in their field or internationally or to developed countries. We need to look at our context. And to deploy creativity to say: What tools do we have available to us, and how could they best be deployed? For the presenter, that was the essence, i.e. efficacious leadership and decision making.</p>

<p>MR RABAN</p>	<p>The presenter stated that human resources were more important than just technology. The study found that at times, one could have the technologies and have the resources. Still, if a college is not culturally ready for e-Learning built on Open Learning principles, they would be setting themselves up for failure. One point that he never highlighted in the study quite explicitly was that Gert Sibande TVET College realised this. When the study was being conducted, they resolved to have change management processes to engage with this issue of all the staff and students being ready for this because this was what they were questioning.</p> <p>In closing, he shared that they may ask themselves, do they have the resources. Still, he thought a more important question was, were they preparing from a conceptual perspective to consider the motivation, especially from the cultural, economic, and political dimensions? Were they ready to roll out e-Learning? And in what capacity? And how were they going to do so? And of course, this being themed around leadership, how did leadership engage with this in how they drive this?</p>
<p>MS GREDLEY</p>	<p>The presenter stated that if she linked the two ideas that Dr Black presented to the funding, or Open Learning through funding, or fundraising, she thought that one of the things that she learned through this case study was that fundraising was so successful at this institution because there was an awareness of context, there was an awareness of the people. Drawing on students, getting students involved in collaborating on their futures and for their peers, finding out who could get involved, who could assist, could be drawn on whether it was community members, or networking across the institution or students themselves, getting them involved in initiatives. They were huge learnings for students. If they could get them involved, she thought that was a win as well.</p>
<p>DR DHURUMRAJ</p>	<p>The presenter stated that if they were looking for a transformation in education, they need to start with their curriculum deliveries. However, as an individual, if they were not willing and open to</p>

	change and to improve themselves, how were they expected to bring about this new skill and transformation and development in a student who was in the future?
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4.2. WEBINAR 2: LECTURER DEVELOPMENT AND OER

4.2.1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, Acting DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET

Ms Trudi van Wyk welcomed the participants and the speakers to the second webinar. She commented on the success of the first webinar and stated that the presenters would answer the questions posed on the chat. The full papers of all the webinars would be published on the Colloquium website.

She introduced the overall theme and began with a brief definition of Open Learning , as defined in the White Paper for PSET: 'an approach that combined the principle of student-centeredness, lifelong learning, the flexibility of learning provision, the removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition for credit of prior learning experiences, the provision of learner support, the construction of learning programmes, the expectation that students could succeed, and the maintenance of rigorous quality assurance over the design of learning materials and support systems'. She described the COOL project and how it formed part of the bigger teaching and learning development support reform contract signed between the DHET and the EU.

She then introduced Prof Makoe, one of the most acknowledged Open Learning researchers globally, who provided insights and presentations and was encouraged by the development and ideas put forward. Ms van Wyk also thanked Professor Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams, the 'mother' of the COOL project, all the researchers who participated, and Paul West from Creative Commons and Derek Moore. They provided a very supportive environment for Open Learning.

4.2.2. KEYNOTE ON OER

Presenter: Professor Mpine Makoe, Chairholder, Commonwealth of Learning in OER/OEP

Prof Makoe introduced herself and her topic: *Re-visioning, OEP and Resources*. She began with re-visioning, which is about reimagining OEP, citing the works of Alvin Toffler: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write. But those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

Part of the mission is to educate for the future, not for the present. As a developing country, we need to follow the National Development Plan (NDP) to address its needs. We have educated people who are going to participate actively and effectively in the country's economic growth. And we are teaching the values that students need to walk away with.

She then outlined the three underlying principles of education. She explained how education was a human right and that the funds for education must be put to proper use and made available to the public. Prof Makoe went on to discuss OER and the importance of sharing knowledge. The open education movement said that knowledge belonged to all of us, and she outlined the journey of sharing knowledge through the ages until they were in the 4IR, which dealt with the Internet of Things. Social media and the internet had become an important part of our lives, and there was also a need for educational resources and MOOCs.

This led to a discussion on academics who developed the material and put it into an open space where anyone could access it. The licencing surrounding this access was discussed; Prof Makoe used her book to explain how this worked. The discussion included Creative Commons licences for images and publishing papers for public consumption, the social justice mandate for education, and how expensive it was to study. The importance of access to technologies, communication and social interaction was integral to furthering open education. The government needed to ensure that every person had access to connectivity, an ICT infrastructure, and the proper devices, irrespective of where they lived.

Prof Makoe concluded by calling these different approaches open pedagogy. It was not the same pedagogy that they were used to. The most important thing was the collaboration between all institutions. We need to rethink the purpose of universities and how they fit into this new knowledge economy. They had to define all this in terms of social justice. We need to strive for an education system that was inclusive, equitable, accessible, and that enabled parity of participation to achieve the education we want for South Africa. This education would lead to economic growth. She ended by saying that we have a moral responsibility to shape the future we want for South Africa.

4.2.3. OPEN LEARNING CONTRIBUTING TO PARITY OF PARTICIPATION OF TVET LECTURERS IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - UFS

Continuities and Ruptures: Working towards 'Open' at UFS

Presenter: Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj Lecturer, UJ

Dr Dhurumraj introduced herself and then presented case study 15. She explained that it was a process that had continued over many years. Education in the South African context was widely promoted because it served as a tool for achieving equity through increasing life opportunities for all those involved. Dr Dhurumraj outlined the story of the UFS and where they intended or attempted to move towards opening up learning. This required the institute to have a clear and concise understanding of how open learning was defined.

Open learning was a way of addressing the imbalances of the past. It sought to provide more opportunities for those who were disadvantaged. The study looked at how the UFS attempted to open up learning by improving students' access, quality and success. She went through the methodology (a qualitative approach) and the

methods of data collection and analysis. Ethical clearances were an important aspect. Five qualifications were inspected and analysed: the art teaching diploma, the advanced diploma, interior teaching, and the establishment of the campus of Open Learning.

It was found that some qualifications were not in alignment with the requirements of the norms and standards for educators' policy. This had a financial impact on the students who were not paid according to the cost of the qualification. It was also found that the development of the centralised curriculum aimed to reduce development costs and time. Other courses were offered online, and short learning programmes were presented in both face-to-face and online modes. This allowed for greater openness and access to students.

The study's findings were presented, where an open university was shifting and contingent and was strongly shaped by contextual readiness. These changes would take some time to happen.

Recommendations moving forward were to categorise activities as ameliorated instead of transformative and moving forward in a fair manner. These ameliorative steps provided the necessary groundwork for more substantial changes to follow. The monitoring of the Advanced Diploma in teaching was required to determine its amelioration or transformative effect in the present situation.

4.2.4. FROM COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE TO A LECTURER SUPPORT SYSTEM - TVET BRANCH, DHET/ Centre for Innovation of Education and Training) (CINOP)

Troubling the Imagined Ideal Subject of Justice and Open Learning: The Case of the Lecturer Support System for TVET Colleges

Presenter: Dr Sara Black, Teacher, Analyst and Researcher, UJ

Dr Sara Black introduced herself and the case study she presented. She briefly outlined her background before explaining the study's idea and the importance of a support structure for lecturers at TVET Colleges. Some type of ideal or vision drove every attempt to change society what they thought was better. Colleges needed to consider this when thinking about their building systems to support in-service lecturers and teachers. The Lecturer Support Service (LSS) was one such system that had gone through some changes to try and better meet the needs of the lecturers it was meant to support. The study could be applied to any Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system.

Dr Black explained how the original system, COP, was analysed to see how it could best serve the lecturers and hence the research questions were formulated. Types of lecturers were discussed, as well as what they thought they did and what types of colleges they should have – and how they discovered that people interpreted these questions very differently. These highlighted the blind spots and assumptions being made. Even more interesting was the lecturers' views, of themselves.

The research started by using discourse analysis, which was an interpretive approach. Various policies were addressed, and lecturers and literature were consulted.

The methodology involved interviewing key decision-makers and desktop research on the historical development of lecturers across different colleges and departments. The following conclusions were made: First, how lecturers were supported were based on perceived needs. Reports were standardised, and little accreditation was given. This contradicted the knowledge gained through this study, and it highlighted that regardless of the system used, they needed to notice the assumptions they made about lecturers and their needs.

Dr Black felt the change to the LSS was a good thing. They wanted lecturers to be autonomous, self-driven professionals who sought the knowledge they needed when they self-diagnosed a gap. Dialogue was encouraged so that the best support structures and conditions could be created. They needed lecturers to be actively involved in decisions regarding their CPD.

4.2.5. DEVELOPMENT OF OER THROUGH OER GRANTS - CPUT AND UCT

The Role of Small Grants to Support OER Development at UCT and CPUT

Presenter: Ms Mahlatse Maake-Malatji PhD Student, UCT

Ms Maake-Malatji began with a brief background on her life and the case study presented, which was based on the role of small grants to support OER development at UCT and CPUT. The research was prompted by the high cost of educational resources such as textbooks, which contributed to the inequalities in access to education. Government funding was not sufficient to provide for all students' needs, especially textbooks.

This posed a hindrance to lifelong learning, which made access to free tuition so important. The study looked at how small grants could help remove these barriers. Ms Maake-Malatji discussed the White Paper for PSET and its recommendations and how these could help build an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system. Her slide presentation highlighted several issues surrounding tertiary education funding and that most funding initiatives seemed to be donor or institutionally funded.

The Open Learning Policy Framework for PSET suggested a range of diverse funding strategies to support the development of OER in the sector. Universities should include OER development in their policies, a principle that was missing from several university policies.

The methodology used was desktop research supported by in-depth interviews. The findings revealed that both universities in the study sought funding to generate small grants. These grants helped alleviate costs for the development of OER, and some resources could not have been created without the grant. However, language recognition remained a challenge. OER development could alleviate this through

translation and production of locally contextualised resources. Finally, the student's voice was the connection to access these materials. The findings had proved that the development of OER required multi-stakeholder collaboration. The presenter contextualised these findings, providing examples of how they could be implemented and the impact of the challenges that may arise.

In conclusion, some recommendations were made: future studies must include student perspectives through surveys, focus groups, or interviews. Recognition should be given to OER developers through staff appraisals and promotions. There should be more government and prime external funding to support the development of OER support. There was also a need for zero-rated websites to enable access to this OER.

4.2.6. OER DEVELOPMENT MODELS FOR TVET COLLEGES

Presenter: Ms Anelisa Dabula, PhD Candidate, UKZN

Ms Anelisa Dabula's presentation was on exploring OER development models for TVET Colleges. After a brief introduction, Ms Dabula explained how the underlying idea that triggered the study was the students' fate without equal access to education and educational resources in South Africa.

She presented several ways of addressing this, including making all resources available through digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators and students. This led to the main research questions: What types of models occur? And how could these be classified?

The Open Learning Policy Framework was raised again. The concern for social justice and the need to redress equity, access to opportunity, flexibility, and choice were driven by the concern. The policy and its aims and benefits were discussed at length, highlighting the importance of the research undertaken.

The methodology adopted in the study was an integrative literature review comprising 86 journal articles.

The findings presented indicate that older models of OERs could be split into seven subsections, based on the initiatives offered: regional geographical model, linguistic model, central government model, provincial model, institutional model, community-based model, and lastly a commercial model. Ms Dabula then used the Nordic initiative as an example of the graphical linguistic model, followed by Oil Africa, funded by international donors. Other examples included the USA federal government model, which looked at colleges and universities funded by the USA's government in a competitive bid.

As a provincial model, a funding initiative in Canada was discussed. And in South Africa, they had the entire institutional model, which was a collaboration between the UP and UCT and funded by DHET. The other models were discussed as well, each with its unique examples. This provided insight into the various options available for funding.

Ms Dabula ended her presentation with a few recommendations: the need for government policy to mandate the creation or the use of teaching materials, the institutional Intellectual Property (IP) regulations needed to be adjusted to give individual lecturers the right to publish and share the teaching material, and a coordinated approach between institutions, funders, lecturers and students.

4.2.7. DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS TO PROF MAKOE	
<p>QUESTION: The delegate indicated that she had written a study guide for public finance, of which part of the content was accessible on her Facebook page. She enquired if she made it 100% open, how would she get rewarded for her IP?</p>	<p>ANSWER: Prof Makoe indicated that she had raised the issue of who pay their salaries when they write textbooks and whether they were doing it as part of the work they were hired to do or were doing it separately. She thought it was something that they needed to do. IP licensing had been one of the things that stopped OER from going forward. The argument was that anything produced, using the public purse and public money, should be made accessible to the citizens of the country because the citizens of the country contributed to the taxes that paid the salaries of educators and lecturers. So, when they developed material, they developed material for their students and for those who wanted access to it.</p> <p>That was a starting point and a critical element of this journey of the openness that they needed to go forward with. Students were struggling with the high costs of textbooks and student fees. So, part of the movement towards OER was to remove those kinds of licencing.</p> <p>This begged the question: what IP were they talking about? Who were they talking to? And why was it so important for them to be rewarded for the work that formed part of their job description as a teacher or lecturer? Education was about sharing. And she thought that was a starting point. Unless they understand that concept, it becomes very problematic.</p>
<p>QUESTION: With the rise in MOOCs and Open Learning, will the requirements of</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that the issues that they were dealing with now were not the things they dealt with ten years ago. They are dealing with</p>

qualifications at the workplace remain unchanged?

MOOCs and the rise of OERs. Even though in those industries, they were beginning to encourage people to train and be knowledgeable about certain things needed in the new environment, there was constant pushback. The initial systems and structures they had in higher education, or in general, were making it difficult for them to move forward or even to think about doing things differently. We have been comfortable in doing things the same way; now, all of a sudden, during COVID-19, MOOCs had the largest downloads during this time than in any other time because people were in desperate need of something that would equip them with the necessary skills to pivot online. They needed to learn skills to be able to do what was necessary. There was also the movement of micro-credentialing, and MOOCs may be a party to it, and if institutions did not start offering short skills-based courses, they might become irrelevant soon. People had been married to the idea that they must finish a degree in three years, knowing that different economies required different skills for people to take risks. The MOOCs would come in very strongly. And if Africa did not start producing MOOCs themselves, we would be forced to bring in programmes and textbooks from overseas at a much higher cost and force students to read or study through foreign modes. The presenter asked why we could not produce our own academic textbooks on statistics that address South African problems. We need to rethink where we want to be and what we need to do.

QUESTION: Please provide three ground-breaking findings from the research

ANSWER: The presenter stated that there is nothing ground-breaking in this world. If participants wanted to know a little bit of her background in education, and in educational technology, in 2007, she started researching using cell phones for teaching and learning. At that time, cell phones were not like the ones we have today; they had basic features. Her approach was that she was teaching in a distance education environment, and there was a problem with interaction among students. They needed to start using what was available in *their* hands to support them in terms of teaching. Her research had been based on how best to support students and how best to make it easier for students to access

what they needed. If lecturers did not support their students to reach the level they needed to reach, they were not doing their work. Today, even universities are using mobile phones to assist in teaching, especially regarding language barriers. There were many ways in which students were helping each other cope with issues of money. They all had the potential to start and have something ground-breaking to deal with the situation that they found themselves in. Education is about sharing.

QUESTIONS TO DR DHURUMRAJ

QUESTION: How are we going to do this practically in South Africa? We need more COP among TVET College lecturers. What can we do to create such COPs?

ANSWER: The presenter indicated that for COPs, we need to be more open to collaboration. If we are willing to collaborate, we could have such COPs come into play. And that was the underlying factor.

QUESTION: How do lecturers use, reuse, and share resources? What practical ways can lecturers share the resources?

ANSWER: The presenter indicated that the most practical way of sharing resources for lecturers was through their collaboration. They wanted to improve through critical engagement and moderation of resources. Every lecturer was in a different space. Just by sharing, one could modify. What works best for Lecturer A may not work for Lecturer B, and vice versa. It could be restructured. Being open to communication and collaboration is the best way to start sharing practices.

QUESTION: How to get buy-in from lecturers in Open Learning?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that to have buy-in, one needs to see the use and value of it as a lecturer. If one saw no value, one would never buy into it. If one saw no value in using it, one was never going to want to develop it.

QUESTIONS TO DR BLACK

QUESTION: What one thing would the presenter do to encourage lecturers to use the mountains of available OERs and subsequently influence the type of support given to lecturers?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that one of the things that were coming through in the discourse analysis that she conducted was a contradictory message to lecturers about taking risks. On the one hand, taking risks was desired because, without risks, there would be no change. On the other hand, there was this jam-packed curriculum and very high pressure for examination results. There was a very tight organisational arrangement at the college level

	<p>regarding timetabling scheduling, staff provision, and monitoring and evaluation. The one thing they were not offering enough of lecturers was the space and breathing room to make errors in the process of learning how to change and trying to use new material. It is dense; they are not sure it matched their curriculum, they are not sure it is appropriate for their students. But they did not have the time or space to try something different.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Did the presenter find a relationship between the vision of the institution and the type of lecturer they were looking for, and subsequently influencing the type of support given to lecturers? In other words, the relationship between the institution's vision, the lecturer's type of person, and the support given?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that because it comes to thinking about how multi-levelled an education system was, and at what scales and at what levels, they were having these visions about lecturers – who they were and what they needed. In their case study, they, unfortunately, did not get to examine any individual TVET College. They looked at the national system, particularly the lecturer support system. Still, it is exactly that relationship they were talking about where a policy and its vision get mediated and interpreted through different system layers. For example, the case she presented at Webinar 1 regarding False Bay TVET College possibly would pick up something.</p> <p>Like the LSS, they worked that into who they knew their lecturers to be, what kinds of support they wanted to offer their lecturers, what kinds of skills shortages they thought their lecturers were struggling with, and how to address those. Thus, even if there were decisions about who lecturers were at, for example, the national level, that would get taken up and mediated and understood in different ways at the college level, at the campus level, at the department level, etc. But what was at the heart of the case that she presented was the relationship between how lecturers were mentally imagined or interpreted by decision-makers.</p>
<p>QUESTION: How can they be ushering in a paradigm shift of education for a social reward? How can they equally tip the scale of justice in the direction that pragmatically redresses the imbalances of the past?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that they needed to be brave in imagining what change looked like. In South Africa, they have a very strong tendency towards hoping that education would be the lever of change for all their social problems. This put an undue burden on both Departments of Education and teachers to somehow rectify everything wrong with society, whether it is safety, cultural injustice, economic inequality, or</p>

maldistribution of economic resources between different country areas. While education had an important role to play, education had to step up to the table and be a coordinated effort across all spheres of society. And it should not be borne by these institutions alone. Their job was teaching and learning. They needed each other, but they needed a holistic and integrated way of thinking about social change that did not burden education institutions purely to seek social justice for all because it is not going to work.

QUESTION TO MS DABULA

QUESTION: What is the presenter's view on the competitive bid process for grants? And how would that explain the curriculum needs for resources? What was the presenter's view on these competitive bid processes, was it a good thing, or is it a bad thing?

ANSWER: The presenter thought it was both a good thing and a bad thing. It would encourage people to try to apply for grants because, at the end of the day, they are going to get their name out there and did not have the knowledge to create these OERs or even to apply for these grants. It is about the choices that they were making that influenced the product of their work.

QUESTIONS TO ALL THE PRESENTERS

In the closing remarks, the presenters were asked to talk a little about using OER for clear course design and teaching resources beyond textbooks.

ANSWER: The presenter stated that OER could prove to be highly beneficial. But again, it is the way they use it and how they put it out there to their students as lecturers. If they could show them the benefit, as they saw in it, it would benefit them. They had to have the motivation to be able to convey that to their students.

The next presenter stated that they needed to reimagine how power was distributed in the education systems. They needed lecturers to step up and become autonomous professionals who were analysing their problems, developing their materials, picking and choosing selectively with professional assurance.

The next presenter responded that people should say how they imagined education systems where they do not centralise power and do not make

people feel afraid to take risks or try new things. How do they claim back what power they can within the structures they have, which is not easy? OER might be one of those things that they could do. At the decision-making level, they need to be building structures; they need to be speaking discourses and building systems that supported that kind of agency at the bottom level of the system.

The next presenter stated that they could make a change within the education system. However, they needed to look at how the differences between the people that have access to resources with the 4IR and the influence that it has had on the education system so far. However, some people were still going to get left behind people from the rural areas; they cannot take that out of the picture that there is still a long way for the education system to go, especially with people still coming to higher education. The presenter thought they were good with the implementation of OER, they would make a huge profit, but a lot of people do not have access to technologies.

4.3. WEBINAR 3: OPEN LEARNING THROUGH A NEW QUALIFICATIONS PERSPECTIVE

4.3.1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chairperson: Ms Thembisa Futshane, DDG: CET, DHET

Ms Futshane welcomed everyone to the Session and noted that this webinar would be presented in two sessions: the first had three presentations by Mr Christoph Vorwerk and Ms Barbara Jones, who would take the argument of micro-credentials further; and Ms Susan Gredley, who would introduce the very important topic of RPL. A question-and-answer Session would follow. Each presenter was allowed one question to respond to, while the rest posted would be responded to on the Research Colloquium website.

The second Session consisted of four presenters who focused on flexible learning pathways and what could be referred to as a fresh look at a new generation, presented by Dr Heidi Bolton, Mr Japie Nel, Mr Wellington Radu, and Mr Navin Vasudev.

4.3.2. KEYNOTE ON DIGITAL CREDENTIALING AND A NEW LEARNING LANDSCAPE/TOWARDS AN AGILE CREDENTIALING SCHEMA IN SOUTH AFRICA LINK TO RPL

Presenter: Dr Rooksana Rajab, Senior Associate, JET Education Services

The presenter indicated that it was a privilege to be addressing the audience on such a cutting-edge topic as digital credentialing. She took them through the current situation that they found themselves in with all the changes. The education sector needed to ensure that their learning systems kept up with this change. She also mentioned the complexity of understanding the relationship between education and work and the changes taking place. The pandemic had also forced South African education to take a long, hard look at itself. And the riots in July 2021 had also made them reflect on whether they were doing enough to prepare South Africans for livelihoods and whether they, in the education sector, were adequately supported in terms of the transformation of the society.

The other challenges were equal access, shifting labour demand, and outdated and sometimes inefficient systems that they found themselves regarding high unemployment, and ensuring that there was sufficient opportunity for technology.

She ventured that they could do more in their practice and not remain stuck in their traditions and that they could agree on three things:

- Lifelong learning was a necessary skills attitude approach to thriving in the modern world;
- Employment prospects were only as good as one's last job; and
- The gap between learning and work seemed to be growing. And this was not closing anytime soon, especially with the pandemic.

The presenter asked whether education was the key to sustainably addressing unemployment, and why were they not getting there? She unpacked the objectives of the NQF with some items that they needed to think about clearly, as she shared her perspectives on digital credentialing.

The new nomenclature they had with the technological era included terminology such as credential digitisation, interoperable, micro interoperable, and the list continued. With a rapidly changing digital society, they had not considered how this could actually change the way they taught and learned and the opportunities it presented for learners' learning pathways. And, at the same time, macro and micro-credentials were gaining increasing momentum around the globe, especially since the outbreak of COVID-19. And governments were looking to get people back into work, probably with upskilling and looking for new opportunities and areas of growth.

After discussing the definition of micro-credentials, the presenter stated that education was not the only sector with a monopoly on credentialing. It is also happening in the labour market, with certifications and licences and badges. Credentials and micro-credentials, therefore, provided opportunities for lifelong learning pathways with the continuous development of skills. Although they talked about credentials, they were talking about knowledge and skills leading to competencies and these were assessed, and evidence was provided. Smaller competency-based models were not always stackable into qualifications. In

addition, to that the number of credits linked to micro-credentials also differed in various countries. But they were clear benefits. And it was this ability to collect multiple credentials from primary institutions added on to licences and badges and online courses that created a holistic picture of personal competencies that could be shared with potential employers. The problem was that, currently, they communicated only a fraction of these educational experiences that happened at their institutions. And for employers, what was most valuable was the skills together with experience and holistically what the learner brought or the potential employee was bringing to the workplace. There was an expectation now on higher education, to find ways to credential better. CPD pathways needed to be linked to the discussions today. And how they could bring that to the centre as they discussed. A good example of a holistic picture of an individual is LinkedIn, where individuals add their competencies, which are then endorsed by networks, who could vouch for these competencies. But this was not formal recognition in any way, whereas they wanted to get formal recognition of this kind of flexible and agile learning. Institutions also needed to find ways to transfer this information, not just to and for students and employers, but also amongst themselves. This transparency between the kind of programmes that are offered, the credits, the courses that were taken up, and how they could get the recognition for those skills and programmes with specific outcomes, is crucial. Credentials mattered in a knowledge economy as the key indicator of critical life outcomes. And the first step was modernising the credential infrastructure for a digital world.

The presenter noted that even before COVID, they had a huge demand for lifelong learning pathways. By the end of 2020, more than 118 million learners were enrolled in over 16,000 MOOCs worldwide, with around 1,200 micro-credentials. This could be the flexibility and agility that South Africa required as a new learning landscape. However, there were sceptics, and they made generalisations and cautioned against being distracted with micro academic credentials or unbundling University qualifications given into market forces. But they also had a uniquely South African challenge, and that was that short courses could only be accredited as a part qualification constituted by credits within a full qualification. There was, formal recognition for it being a quality-assured programme if it was a short course. Another South African unique challenge was the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO). This created a challenge for qualification development, which must be developed against occupations and then registered. A further challenge was how different this was from skills development qualifications, such as learnerships, apprenticeships, and WBL programmes developed by SETAs.

She continued that providing decision-makers at all levels with a framework to describe the attributes of a quality credential was one that required a partnership process across all stakeholders in the post-school system. If we would require transparency around learning outcomes, there was much work to be done, but a worthwhile opportunity to begin to reshape the education and training system.

In conclusion, if we considered agile credentialing in South Africa, then we are really at a crossroad. We have the opportunity to venture into the space and the possibilities to integrate credential transparency into the education workforce, and workforce development strategies did exist. The micro-credentialing movement globally also

provided opportunities for governments and higher education to partner with industry to look at new digital learning modules beyond the pandemic. And there was emerging evidence of how popular online learning had become. However, we must acknowledge that more research was needed and that we need to understand different perspectives. We need to collaborate and find a way of looking at how we could develop a strategy around micro-credentialing.

4.3.3. MICRO-CREDENTIALS FOR THE ADVANCED COMPOSITES INDUSTRY – MERSETA Combining the QCTO Model with Open Badges

Presenter: Mr Christoph Vorwerk, Skills Development Specialist, merSETA

Mr Vorwerk spoke on digital badging in the advanced composites industry by explaining what the advanced composite industry was about and how digital badging fitted into it. The key driver was weight reduction, which started with building the space shuttles in the 1970s and was part of the most advanced products required to be lightweight and resilient. After describing how the composites were constructed and how valuable these production skills were, Mr Vorwerk delved into how these skills evolved and the different types of skills that emerged. It soon became clear that the operator, designer and quality assurer had to work together during training sessions.

Due to its unique processes, Mr Vorwerk needed to find another model to help explain the industry.

Given that the value chain analysis did not help explain this industry, he turned to Prof Snowden's Cynefin framework and examined the industry about that framework. Prof Snowden felt that so much of what was taught was rigid, inflexible and out of date. He used The Toyota Way as an example of how there was always a better way to do things and how it was important to consult people at every level of the production system – each person was an expert in their field and were best placed to find a solution.

The key to solving problems in this domain was iterative small-scale tests to discover what worked and what did not. In advanced composites manufacturing, this testing also took place in an environment of constant technological change.

In education and training solutions, we as a nation found ourselves politically, socially, economically and educationally in the complex domain. To find a way of recognising learning requires a different way of looking at it. And this was where digital credentials came in in the late 2000s. Digital credentials were generally small, incremental units of learning. And it is learning that created value for both the owner of the badge and the working context of the owner.

For the advanced competence study, Mr Vorwerk adopted the Open Badges model of learning challenges, which focused on providing evidence of creating value, not just hours of study. The badge was an image, which had all the relevant details baked into it. The emphasis was not on the attendance of courses but on generating solutions. He said that the idea that what a person had learned in a training

environment automatically made them capable in a real-life situation was a delusion. In this case study, digital badges would make it easier for the industry and individual companies to obtain overseas certifications. This meant that material suppliers could also become accrediting quality assurance agents in this process of digital badging.

Increasingly, industry certifications would form a greater form of recognition than formal qualifications from the education system. But it takes a long time to register qualifications – up to five years. There was also a trend to recognising simulated work experience difficulty, which might pose the danger of creating a two-tier level of recognition: those who have learned in the context of work and those who have learned in the context of a training workshop. Digital badging could overcome some of these deficiencies and create greater flexibility in complex working environments, especially in the areas of new forms of work and emerging optic occupations and professions. In the wake of the COVID-19 lockdowns and changing the way they work, we desperately needed a more agile system that could respond to these learning needs on a bigger and broader basis than simply the advanced composites industry.

4.3.4. MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND DIGITAL BADGES CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIAL JUSTICE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA - NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY (NWU)

Presenter: Ms Barbara Jones, Curriculum Development Specialist, UWC

Ms Barbara Jones introduced the topic of micro-credentials in higher education, and case study 14 that looked at micro-credentials and digital badges as opportunities for opening higher education in South Africa through innovative recognition. Despite the progress that had been made in all spheres of the South African democratic project since 1994, many inequities continued in higher education; among these, enrolment rates and higher education remained low compared to global figures. The traditional admissions criteria automatically excused swathes of school leavers. The attrition rates of students in higher education were also unacceptably high, due to structural inflexibility that limited subject choice, and little flexibility in how to study other than distance, part time and full-time registration options. Those who did not manage to complete their qualifications were left with a huge debt to repay, and without skills to find a job.

The research question was: How could micro-credentials and digital badges contribute towards social justice in South African higher education?

Ms Jones went on to define micro-credentials and how they could be used to assess learning, thereby providing a formal accredited qualification. The insights were profound and could open a whole new sphere in the job market. Digital badges were a subset of micro credentials, a visual electronic record of a discrete set of skills, abilities and knowledge achieved inside or outside the classroom. Micro-credentials could be used as part of the formal qualification, written into the programme. In the study, economic and cultural inequities were focused on as the most prominent social justice concerns that might be remedied by micro-credentials and digital badges. The study employed a qualitative methodology. Micro-credentials were a new

concept in South Africa and very few public universities were engaging with them in significant ways. The study engaged with several digital badging initiatives that had been piloted at NWU, which showed how these awards motivated learning and could be used to recognise CPD courses for lecturers.

NQFs around the world were starting to interface with emerging micro-credentials in various ways, and Ms Jones presented several examples from around the world that could inform a strategy for implementing micro-credentials in South Africa. She recommended that there were several opportunities for higher education institutions to pilot and experiment with digital badging, to develop institutional policies for micro-credentials, digital badges and OER, and explore the possibilities for inter- and intra-institutional micro-credentials. For the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), a new qualifications framework should promote e-Learning credentials, OER, and facilitate national and international credit transfer. In summary, an integrated national policy framework for PSET is needed, that is explicitly framed by social justice concerns to guide the process of developing and implementing a system of micro-credentials.

4.3.5. RPL – ENABLING PARITY OF PARTICIPATION OF ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION - UWC

RPL: Opening Access to Higher Education

Presenter: Ms Susan Gredley, PhD candidate, UWC

Ms Susan Gredley introduced her case study by telling the participants a little about her background. Her various teaching and research roles brought a fresh and innovative perspective to this case study. The presentation started with a definition of RPL and how it could help to transform teaching, learning and access to education and training in quite radical ways. The research questions for this study started with an overall research question: In what ways and to what extent were current RPL practices opening up access to students in the PSET sector through recognising their experiential, non-formal and informal learning? Sub questions included: How was RPL conceptualised locally and internationally? Where was their consensus? And what were the differences? What were RPL strategies currently implemented in post-school institutions? And in what ways and to what extent were current RPL strategies and practices enabling RPL candidates and students to participate as equals with their peers?

Ms Gredley set the scene in a South African context and looked at policies and practices, different conceptions, and different approaches, models and practices of RPL. Between 1998 and 2019, there had been at least 12 RPL related policy documents. However, although RPL had been taken up enthusiastically by many academics, there were challenges around implementation because it is complex, time- and labour-intensive, and costly.

The methodology for this case study was a qualitative approach, and due to challenges posed by the pandemic, the focus shifted slightly. Two highly experienced RPL experts were interviewed. Their insights highlighted the underlying economic,

cultural and political injustices faced by students seeking entry to post-school studies. The framework of participatory parity social justice was about whether people could participate. It was all about whether people had equal access to decision making powers.

As to Ms Gredley's findings, RPL was a complex process. Several challenges and barriers to success were noted. Challenges around RPL policy development and implementation, resourcing challenges and quality assurance. More resources were needed as RPL takes time and specialised practitioners, and quality assurance needed more emphasis and funding. A challenge noted was that some candidates may need special support to help them cross the boundaries from informal learning to formal academic spaces.

Ms Gredley concluded by making a few recommendations: First, the understanding that RPL was not one size fits all and varied across contexts and that RPL was a process rather than a once-off event. Second, candidates and students needed a range of support services. Third, academic staff and practitioners needed specialised training to support the time and experience needed. Fourth, tracking monitoring and further research were needed. And finally, funding was needed to support all of this.

4.3.6. DIVERSE 'SUCCESSFUL' RECOGNITION OF PRIOR INITIATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA

RPL in the Context of Flexible Learning Pathways (from the SAQA - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) research)

Presenter: Dr Heidi Bolton, Senior Manager, SAQA

Dr Heidi Bolton presented her case study on diverse, successful RPL initiatives in South Africa as part of flexible learning pathways. There were many successful initiatives in South Africa, and Dr Bolton discussed the challenges and opportunities within the South African context.

The idea of learning pathways and flexible learning had grown both locally and internationally. It is essentially about diverse opportunities for diverse learners. Since every country worldwide had linked their education and training system to a regional qualifications framework, mobility (movement of people for learning and work) became important.

Dr Bolton went on to describe a flexible learning pathway, starting with a pathway map. She raised several salient points, such as part-time mentoring study, extended curriculum programmes, supplemental instruction, anything that learners could do while studying that could take extra time. She moved on to RPL and its achievements in South Africa since 2002, including brief descriptions of RPL and its initiatives in various sectors.

Next, she presented ten examples of good practice, although these were not the only examples in South Africa. These included the Portfolio Development Course offered at Cornerstone College and professional sports coaching qualifications. In South

Africa, there was a shift from letters of reference from employers to the use of actual competencies, recognition of learning against actual competencies and assessing the numeracy and literacy levels of applicants.

Dr Bolton then described the success and huge satisfaction of candidates when they related the experiences of RPL. RPL had enhanced their lives, and flexible pathways, in general, had given people (from very poor communities, violence-ridden communities, single parents, people in prison etc.) a new lease on life. They had gone on to do postgraduate studies and to be very successful.

Dr Bolton highlighted that South Africa's robust policy framework, institutional commitments, and innovative practice worked well in these flexible pathways. What needed improvement was funding for flexible learning pathways and RPL in particular and a bit of balance between institutional autonomy and national policies. Also, more monitoring and sharing of practices were needed.

She closed by stressing how very important it was to map learning pathways and articulation pathways so that they were grids of possibility visible to everyone.

4.3.7. RECOGNITION AND LEARNER MOBILITY (NATIONAL, REGIONAL, CONTINENTAL, AND GLOBAL RECOGNITION NETWORKS)

Recognition Networks and Mobility in Learning and Work

Presenters: Mr Japie Nel, Senior Manager: NQF Qualifications and Professional Bodies, SAQA; Mr Wellington Radu, Senior Manager: Authentication Services, SAQA; and Mr Navin Vasudev, Manager: Business Development and Stakeholders, SAQA

The three speakers covered the more practical aspects of the NQFs, such as mobility, recognition of foreign qualifications and international mobility of students.

Mr Japie Nel started by discussing the registration of qualifications and how the registration process contributed to the mobility of learners for learning as well as for work. Mr Wellington Radu followed with what the verification of South African qualifications and evaluation of foreign qualifications had to do with learner mobility. Finally, Mr Navin Vasudev spoke about international networks and how they played a role in enhancing learning mobility and presented the conclusion.

Mr Nel started by outlining the background of SAQA and the NQF. This led to how these frameworks should facilitate access, mobility and progression. Mr Nel explained how SAQA registered qualifications and professional designations on the NQF. They also recognised professional bodies and provided evaluation advisory services. He outlined the importance of registering with SAQA. The mobility of learners as part of the objectives, looking at how they could move between qualifications, breaking down the barriers between institutions and how they could progress within the learning environment and work environment. These qualifications were also used for verification and comparison purposes.

There were two types of occupational qualifications that total around 1,890. These were divided into different sub frameworks and at different levels. A depth of criteria was required to register a qualification on the NQF, which was necessary to gain the RPL entry requirements, articulation and international compatibility.

Mr Nel emphasised how important it was to ensure learning mobility enabled access and enhanced the learning process. He used several examples to explain how a learner needed to identify a work pathway that was not a dead-end qualification. This applied to international compatibility too – how could the learner use this qualification abroad? He then moved into the benefits of RPL and how non-formal, informal and other formal learning already completed could form part of the learner's learning. He listed the various certificates and exemptions that could help learners on their pathway towards minimum academic knowledge and practical competence. These criteria had been balanced against international practices too. There were globally and nationally developments that needed to be considered part of a learner's development.

About 80% of the country's basic education and training systems were based on qualification frameworks. How did South Africa qualifications compare to qualifications as part of the United Nation's countries?

Mr Wellington Radu looked at international trends. He pointed out that they needed to trust qualifications to have an education system that everyone in this country could believe in and that worked for them. And he agreed that while quality was important, mobility was the focus of the presentation at the core.

Mr Radu discussed South African versus foreign qualifications and why mobility was so important in this context, not only in terms of learning but also in terms of work. Another issue was the authenticity of the award. Was the qualification obtained legally?

Mr Radu explained how important it was to have qualifications that would be internationally recognised. He then presented several graphs showing SAQA applications for certificates since 2014, compared to the number of certificates awarded. There had been a steady decline in applications over the years, COVID-19 notwithstanding. The reasons for the decline had been identified, and Mr Radu confirmed that SAQA was working on improving this graph over the coming years. He then compared NQF levels against the number of recognised qualifications and the types of skills coming into the country from foreign lands. It was important to reach an international agreement with the more prevalent countries, such as India and Nigeria.

The South African qualifications graph showed a brief spike in 2019 following the NQF Amendment Act being signed, but once again, COVID-19 caused figures to drop in later years.

Interestingly, there had been an increase in requests for verification letters, especially during the pandemic. This was indicative of people leaving the country, people with skills.

Mr Navin Vasudev's presentation addressed international networks and how they played a role in enhancing learner mobility.

He provided insight into work in South Africa, the education landscape, and how it influenced the International Education landscape. He stressed the importance of international networks as structures that had a very positive outcome on the issue of mobility. Mention was made of the numerous networks and structures that were being operated quite well to enable mobility in learning at a cross-national policy-level implementation and a planning level. He briefly looked at some of these networks, including agreements, which had played a very important role in the past several years. The first was the African Continental Qualifications Framework; a Pan African Qualification Framework developed Africa-wide. The second was the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Qualifications Framework. Both frameworks were important because they shared the collective objective of enhancing mobility on the African continent.

Mr Vasudev also discussed the revised convention on the recognition of studies, certificates, diplomas, degrees and other academic qualifications in higher education in African states and the important role South Africa played in ratifying this convention. He went on to focus on two areas: the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. This had become important on the international political agenda, and South Africa signed with various countries bilaterally.

What was important was that networks collaborated, leading to several interesting activities, both globally and on the African continent. He discussed the advantages of establishing networks and whether they helped. The world was a village with these networks, and platforms on excellent technology. This was linked to sharing and building relationships, an important aspect that helped with evaluations of qualifications.

4.3.8. DISCUSSION

QUESTION TO MR VORWERK	
QUESTION: Are we undermining the fundamentals of learning and risking the ability of individuals to function independently in the	ANSWER: The presenter stated that perhaps he over-emphasised the new knowledge component in his presentation. Digital credentials could also be developed to assist people in learning foundational type knowledge. It all depended on how they were designed. And the particular purpose for that

absence of technology when shifting the focus of learning towards new content only? As much as the integration and use of technology is vital, is maintaining the basic knowledge not more important for the sustainable development of individuals?

credential did not only have to be all in the form of new knowledge or evolving knowledge. Still, it could also be in the form of mastering the foundational knowledge, not necessarily in terms of passing an exam, but certainly in terms of applying or testing and applying that knowledge in a particular context to achieve a particular purpose. It was also interesting to note that they had two paradigms at play: they had the teaching paradigm, which fell into the obvious domain, it is the things that they had to learn to be able to do X or Y. And they generally built the upfront model where people had to learn a lot of things, and then only much later learn to apply that. With digital credentials, they could change that so that people acquire the knowledge they need for purposes at the point at which they need it, rather than in advance of that. The design of the digital credential was quite crucial to achieving learning objectives.

QUESTION TO MS JONES

QUESTION: How does digital credentials accelerate redressing past unfair discrimination in education, given the limited accessibility of employment and technology to marginalised society?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that she accepted and realised that when there were talking about digital learning, any of those things that they were so often marginalising, or those who were already marginalised, were marginalised even more. They had to take it as a given because technology, the internet, was changing, and coverage was becoming greater. Hopefully, within a reasonably short period, more and more outlying areas that did not have access to technology would be covered. Especially now that we have satellite systems going up, we are supposed to be providing connection to everybody, everywhere. But in terms of the main thrust of the question, as she understood it, in terms of allowing for other cultural knowledge to be included in formal learning systems, she thought that digital credentials had a huge role to play. The researchers are in a new programme development about how long it takes for any changes in a formal qualification to go through the system. It could take years, by which time often a lot of the information was out of date. Micro-credentials allowed that agility to plug in

new, emerging knowledge into a qualification in ways that empowered the people.

QUESTION TO MS GREDLEY

QUESTION: The delegate was very interested to learn more about RPL opportunities for refugees in South Africa. RPL was an important route for this cohort to get their qualifications recognised and assimilate into South African society. She enquired whether other resources were available for RPL for this cohort.

ANSWER: The presenter responded that she thought that that sounded like an interesting project. She did not know what kinds of resources were available. And she thought that maybe a question might need to go to providers, maybe educational institutions or to quality councils. She did not think that she could answer that question very well, unfortunately. But one that she could answer was if it would be better to focus on RPL for access rather than RPL as ongoing support. Her interviewees emphasised RPL for access into formal education, not that it was the only kind of RPL but that, at that sort of access point, the complexity was taking participants' kind of knowledge, which would apply to refugees. What was it that they knew? How did they know it? And how could they translate what they knew into academic knowledge? In other words, how could the boundary from what might be more informal or even formal knowledge be gained in a different context? How could they translate that for the South African context?

QUESTION TO DR BOLTON

QUESTION: Are there any costing guidelines available for RPL processes offered by providers to help ensure affordability for the learner or the sponsor?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that there was a list of resources available on the last slide of the presentation. SAQA has documented many good RPL practices in the last ten years and this was available in the SAQA bulletins. They could make these available.

QUESTION TO MR VASUDEV

QUESTION: Why is costing of RPL important?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that what RPL costs was a very important question. That was something for experts to ask and practitioners to respond to, but he thought it was a really important area to gain knowledge in. Because when it comes to doing an RPL implementation, the planning part of RPL was really important, as was the resource

	base of what it meant when they were implementing RPL. He thought this was an area that required a lot of discussion, and he could not answer it himself; he would leave it to the experts to discuss the area of resources that RPL takes.
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4.4. WEBINAR 4: FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES IN PSET

4.4.1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chairperson: Dr Thandi Lewin, A/DDG, University Education, DHET

Dr Thandi Lewin began by outlining the Open Learning series of webinars and mentioned how exciting it was to have participants from South Africa, the African continent and overseas. She encouraged participants to look at the videos and recordings of the Sessions that had already taken place to stimulate some lively discussions.

The Colloquium theme was one of the most relevant topics in the PSET environment, both here and globally. We are talking about flexible and blended learning PSET. These concepts have many names, but Open Learning was defined in the White Paper for PSET as that which combines the principles of student-centeredness, lifelong learning, the flexibility of learning provision, the removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition for credit of prior learning experience, the provision of students support the construction of learning programmes in the expectation that students could succeed, and the maintenance of rigorous quality assurance over the design of learning materials and support systems.

This webinar focused on flexible and blended learning, teaching and learning practices in PSET, with presentations from the COOL project. This project had been defined in previous webinars, and its findings have been invaluable.

Dr Lewin handed over to the keynote speaker, Prof Francois Strydom, after briefly summarising his qualifications and achievements.

4.4.2. KEYNOTE ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND LEARNING MATERIALS DURING THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Students Access to and use of Learning Materials

Presenter: Prof Francois Strydom, Senior Director, UFS

Professor Strydom's presentation looked at the relationship between students and learning materials during the emergency response to COVID-19. He started by providing a timeline to the research conducted based on two questions:

- To what extent were students able to access and use different forms of materials?
- In what ways, if any, did the students' access and use of learning materials differ before and after a national lockdown?

The collection method was a survey sent to about 49,000 students, which returned 3,700 pages of qualitative data. This was analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and thematic inductive and deductive analysis using text algorithms. He explained the graphs on learning materials and the access students had before lockdown.

Once in lockdown, data became integral to learning. Roughly 90% of all had an internet-enabled smartphone, 6% could access one via a family member, and only 4% could not access an internet-enabled device. Next, Prof Strydom took delegates through how students engaged with each case of technology. The learning environment influenced this; many students needed the university environment to study. Students suddenly needed to learn how to ethically use academic material available online and not plagiarise. This all saw significant demand for digital skills.

In terms of benefits, students realised that they could adapt, and they were motivated, even on devices. They were more focused; they were able to use other resources such as Khan Academy and YouTube. Lecturers put more materials for students online so they could understand the content. This led to improvement in performance in many institutions.

As for challenges, some lecturers were not good at communicating, and the lectures were not well organised even before lockdown. Many online assessments did not have clear instructions, and they did not receive feedback. And access to data made the digital divide very real.

Prof Strydom recommended that basic learning infrastructure was critical. Digital skills development needed to be prioritised institutionally and nationally, and academic staff needed to be trained on incorporating educational technology as part of the pedagogy. The third was flexible content delivery platforms. The first policy they suggested needed to very strongly guide their learning material allowances. Students and institutions had learned valuable lessons on how to infuse technology with pedagogy. Should a new teaching and learning environment be used to raise the bar?

Finally, this was an opportunity to reconceptualise subsidy assumptions and quality assurance. How they defined contact distance and online in a new normal was a very big challenge.

Prof Strydom closed by saying how exciting these times were and that it was a global problem – the challenge was how to make the most of the opportunities presented.

4.4.3. ONLINE ASSESSMENT INFLUENCING SOCIAL JUSTICE AT SOUTH AFRICAN TVET COLLEGES - TSHWANE NORTH TVET COLLEGE

Exploring the Possibilities and Constraints of Online Assessment to Advance the Open Learning Agenda from a Social Justice Perspective

Presenter: Dr Cheng-Wen Huang, Lecturer and Researcher, UCT

Dr Cheng-Wen Huang introduced herself and the work she was doing at UCT. She outlined the focus of the study, which was fundamentally about increasing access and increasing success. For most institutions, the mandate to increase access was difficult. There simply was not enough capacity or buildings to take in more students. A solution was Open Learning, which primarily involved distance learning, which brought them to the research question: What were the possibilities and constraints on an assessment to advance the DHET's Open Learning agenda from a social justice perspective?

A social justice perspective was adopted for this project. It took the research question further: What were the possibilities and constraints on an assessment to enable parity of participation from an economic, cultural and political perspective?

Dr Huang moved on to the policies and prior research and explained how Open Learning was conceived as an educational model that would complement a traditional campus-based education model. She then defined assessment and concluded that online assessment covered a range of activities, from design, delivery, marking, reporting, and record keeping.

This qualitative case study involving staff and students used several online interviews, email exchanges, and WhatsApp exchanges. In terms of data analysis, she developed a coding framework and conducted a thematic analysis of concepts related to Open Learning issues. The findings showed flexibility in time and place emerging as a key affordance.

But there were also limitations relating primarily to accessibility, issues with data connectivity, electricity and device. Dr Huang pointed out that repeat assessments could be done cost-effectively through the automation capability but questions the integrity of the data – who completed the assessment?

Lack of policy was another key constraint, and so was moderation. The other challenge was the number of questions that comprised a question paper. Considering these findings, Dr Huang made the following recommendations: there was a need for a policy analysis, to set a set of protocols that spoke to the practice, and the issue of accessibility. Lecturers needed to be great and experimental. By sharing knowledge, sustained cultivating motivation and innovation could result.

4.4.4. FLEXIBLE LEARNING CATERING FOR THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF STUDENTS THROUGH OPEN LEARNING - GOLDFIELDS TVET COLLEGE

Exploring the Possibilities and Limitations of Flexible Learning Provision in a TVET College: A Social Justice Perspective

Presenter: Ms Gertrude van Wyk, Teacher and Researcher, and Doctoral student, Western Kentucky University

Ms van Wyk addressed the participants from Kentucky University, where she was pursuing her doctoral degree in educational leadership, focusing on gifted education.

As with previous presenters, Ms van Wyk also placed some focus on the social justice perspective. Success was measured by improved throughput rate and employability, which was substantially low given the failure rate of 66.53%. She described the key concepts of the Open Learning Policy Framework intended to broaden access to affordable quality learning.

The research question for the study was as follows: How had Goldfields TVET College opened up learning by providing flexible learning to each student? The methodology was a qualitative case study with in-depth interviews done online. The pandemic limited the people available for interviews.

The findings were analysed symmetrically into flexibility to support success and overcome poverty, flexible use of technology to address the lack of in-person contact, and flexible use of various media to alleviate some of the material costs. The findings showed flexibility to support success, as it was an opportunity to retake the failed subjects through an intervention programme.

Ms van Wyk then used the example of Goldfields TVET College to put these findings in real-time perspective. There was also discussion surrounding the flexible use of a variety of media to alleviate materials costs.

She recommended that Goldfields College look into college passes for students and staff transportation. They could also investigate the subsidies. The college also needed more space for classrooms. She felt that the Open Framework Policy could work well for this college. The college should also try to employ more staff, especially those qualified in their teaching subjects.

Ms van Wyk concluded by listing several ways Goldfield TVET College could improve its application of the Open Learning Policy.

4.4.5. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES AND LEARNING DESIGNS IN BLENDED LEARNING - NORTHLINK TVET COLLEGE

Blending and Opening up Learning at Northlink TVET College

Presenter: Mr Mukhtar Raban, Lecturer, NMU

Mr Raban addressed how blended learning could be used to open up learning at a TVET College in South Africa, using Northlink TVET College as an example.

He acknowledged that blended learning was increasing globally and in South Africa. It was adopted as a pedagogical and methodological approach to learning and teaching through the strategic use of technology, complementing contact teaching. In South Africa, blended learning was on an upward trajectory.

But what did Open Learning mean? Open Learning could be realised via blended learning. Mr Raban looked at how blended learning was implemented and its effect on pedagogy, considering, among others, the rapid move to integrate ICT into their classrooms. He identified Northlink TVET College as a potential leader in blended learning. This led to the research question: How was blended learning opening up learning for students in a TVET College in South Africa? The study specifically looked at ways that blended learning was operationalised at the college, at some of the pedagogical approaches that were followed, the category of blended learning at the college and the students and staff's perceptions of blended learning at the college. DHET had also identified several barriers to Open Learning and felt that removing these barriers was the only way to successful learning.

Mr Raban went through the principles of the draft Open Learning Policy Framework. Open learning was frequently explored via ICT-mediated means, such as blended learning. Blended learning was the combination of online learning and face to face or contact learning. This was particularly prevalent in those times when lockdown rules had eased and online learning blended with back-to-class lectures. Before this could be done, the lecturer had to ask: How was this encounter constructed? How was it conceptualised? How was it planned? What principles were taken into consideration when they wanted to implement a blended learning encounter?

Mr Raban then moved on to the concept of social justice and how it related to blended learning and Open Learning. He mentioned the three-dimensional views of economic, political and cultural justice and how each one influences and is influenced. When these three areas or dimensions were met, they could declare that social justice was okay. He then explained how combining social justice with ICT in education becomes an ICT-mediated approach to teaching and learning. He explained several useful principles to follow to foster social justice in a blended learning offering.

Moving on to the case study, the methodology was qualitative. Research tools for gathering data included online interviews with the manager of the Education and Training Unit at Northlink TVET College and online interviews with two lecturers from the college, and a focus group with six students at the campus. The data was collected and qualitatively analysed. The study found that Northlink TVET College broadly employed a sound strategy in operationalising and employing blended learning. A detailed outline of the findings, specifically as they related to Northlink, was then presented.

Mr Raban concluded that the college's approaches to blended learning could be seen broadly as a way of opening up learning. Some recommendations for the college included providing additional support and training for students in particular and incorporating multilingual practices in the online learning areas. He closed off his presentation by thanking the participants at Northlink College, his COOL project mentors and the team.

4.4.6. ONLINE LEARNING ACHIEVING PARITY OF PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS – DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (DUT)

An Investigation of how Online Learning is Opening up Education in the Higher Education Sector: A Case Study of the DUT

Presenter: Ms Sinethemba Zungu, Researcher, UKZN

Ms Zungu presented an investigation of how online learning was opening up education in the higher education sector, based on a case study of the DUT. The research interests included social justice, innovation and equitable access to education, and ensuring accessible, equitable quality education and opening opportunities for lifelong learning for all. This could be done by employing digitally supported learning or other online learning to widen access to learning. Ms Zungu went on to explain how this would work.

DHET had stated that online learning could not be equated to Open Learning. There were some challenges in adopting online learning, such as the unequal access to ICT and unreliable and expensive internet connectivity, as well as the lack of access to digital devices and digital fluidity. This fed the fear that online learning would deepen the digital divide.

Ms Zungu wanted to find out how Open Learning was conceived and associated with online learning, if at all, and what measures were in place to ensure student and lecturer readiness for online learning. Her methodology was a qualitative study. Interviews were conducted through online platforms, telephonic discussions and WhatsApp messages. However, the COVID-19 pandemic posed limitations in their responses. Generally, respondents felt that the DHET's definition was too broad, which would make it vulnerable to misconceptions and misunderstandings. Findings indicated lecturers were supported through 24-hour communication channels that were open during the emergency remote learning. Lecturers were trained how to teach online and tutor students. Lack of resources and poor connectivity from home hindered teaching. Many students preferred contact classes because they could see the teacher, they did not have to buy data, and everything was in the classroom. Other reasons were access to the lecturer and affordability of data, and lack of devices at home. The provision of data was often erratic. And for those students who were in areas that did not have data coverage, online learning was near impossible.

However, supporters of online learning enjoyed flexible time, saving on travel costs and printing costs and easy access to learning material online.

Some of the major inequalities, both economic and cultural, may marginalise some students and those mainly living in rural areas. Ms Zungu, therefore, recommended that DHET refine the definition of Open Learning and the Policy Framework. There should be sessions to bridge this gap of understanding and encourage the implementation of Open Learning practice and provide resources such as laptops for staff working at home. Finally, the National Department of Communications and Digital Technologies should improve telecommunication infrastructure and internet connectivity within remote areas.

4.4.7. DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS TO PROF STRYDOM	
QUESTION: What is meant by a supportive and enabling environment?	ANSWER: The presenter responded that he thought that they were the enabling mechanisms, and he had seen that UNESCO was asking for a norm that infrastructure universities could provide. And that is a national issue. But he was very encouraged by some of the things he read in the papers. The DHET would be more informed on what was being discussed in terms of trying to create the infrastructure for a new learning environment; he thought that was absolutely crucial.
QUESTION: Are higher education institutions able to bridge the gap between the two modalities of learning? Are academic staff at higher education institutions fully prepared for blended learning and could this type of study be conducted in TVET Colleges?	ANSWER: The presenter responded that addressing the infrastructure issues was very important in terms of bridging the gap between the two modalities of learning; he thought that was an incredibly exciting challenge. If they looked at this data, and it is not a nice perception of the university, he would have been absolutely blown away. More than one colleague had said how this impacts everyone, to try to save the academic year and what students overcame to participate in learning. People were not letting the crisis get the better of them. He could not think why they could not find ways of bridging that gap. But they are going to have to think, and look at the data. And he looked at data because the data was students' voices. The student had to be at the centre. That is why they had been doing work around student voices since 2007. Because they were deeply convinced and committed to the fact that their students needed to be at the centre, but he was encouraged, he thought it had been a very difficult time and that many of them were dealing with fatigue in the system. But the very

positive news was that people had responded to the crisis. And that gave them a lot to work with. They had wonderful expertise in the sector. And if they are going to be like people who develop the vaccine, they are going to collaborate. But could they embrace the opportunity to truly collaborate and create something special? For their context? He believed they got the people, and he believed they got the talent. They just need to have the world.

QUESTIONS TO DR HUANG

QUESTION: How did the presenter see the difference between an online assessment of learning and online assessment for learning?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that this was what highlighted the different purposes of assessments. Whether it was for online or face to face assessments, it could be used for different purposes, like summative formative, diagnostic, and so on. She thought that she was on an assessment of learning, which spoke more to the summative purpose. And this was where the issue of academic integrity came in and the need for some support for online proctoring, and so on. This was slightly problematic for her because there were no good means to overcome the issue of academic integrity. They could do some mitigation strategies, but there is no real way of overcoming them. And she did not think online proctoring was a good solution given issues of ethics, connectivity, devices and so on. We need to think more carefully about the online environments and what are its potentials and limitations, and then harness the potentials.

QUESTION: In terms of record-keeping and the record-keeping function of online assessment, could the presenter elaborate more on this aspect of online assessment?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that she thought that this spoke more for formative purpose. They saw quite clearly from the literature that online forms of assessment did as well as the formative purpose. This was a key potential on this assessment. They should harness this potential. Overall, they needed to look at online assessment compared to face to face and see that these two areas both had potentials and limitations. With regards to the record-keeping of an assessment, work, feedback, assessment, and test outcomes could all be stored online. This made it easy for students to access the record but also for lecturers to track progress. In this way, the data collected could allow them to

accumulate assessment data, and those analytics are a growing area of research. In this ecosystem of storing grades and feedback along with learning materials, they created a nice Learning Hub for students, allowing them to view various resources together.

QUESTIONS TO MR RABAN

QUESTION: How can colleges engage with other professionals to participate and collaborate in technological ideas to help improve safe, reliable and productive learning platforms used in different levels of educational institutions?

ANSWER: The presenter responded that the formulation of a COP was critical. One of the outcomes of the COOL project, as they engaged with various TVET Colleges and universities, was that they are siloes attempts to explore the impact of the integration of technology into the teaching and learning encounters and experiences. Without a doubt, calling for increased collaboration was a critical point. DHET could be asked what could be done to foster this. He would recommend that they draw on the sort of framework of a COP. As with the case study, within that specific college, there were multiple campuses; they had regular fora that encouraged COPs' sharing of best practices so that they could be a collective attempt as a college. And now, extending that notion to multiple institutions, there could be platforms and opportunities for collaboration that were in line ultimately with Open Learning principles. There needed to be the sharing of information and of resources, the sharing of ideas and approaches. Mechanisms such as those had to be really developed and pushed and driven to ensure that open learning could truly proliferate.

QUESTION: How can project-based learning and design thinking be incorporated into teaching and learning?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that this question was quite a vast one. It was noted that it was tough to answer that in a single response because both of those concepts were so extensively explored. Project-based learning had a basis in literature in terms of how it was taken up in teaching and learning spaces in assessment strategies. So perhaps the question was maybe leading to awards, how could those be taken up in the online space? In the blended learning space within an Open Learning framework? These are critical considerations. The same applied to design thinking. In fact, his PhD studies focused on the

	<p>exploration of design thinking principles in the way blended learning was offered. There were ways in which it could be done, and it was a little challenging to identify a single way because those concepts in themselves were quite vast. He would be willing to engage with the individual who posed the question for them to maybe also engage in some COP along those lines.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Which fields of study were the lecturer and the students engaged with? Did the presenter believe that lack of interactiveness between students and lecturers existed in current platforms? How do they fill this gap?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter answered that the study was located during the COVID- 19 pandemic, and they used all forms of online interaction. The lack of interactiveness was real – it was raised that many of the students preferred contact classes because they were able to interact with not only the lecturers but also with the students. And in some cases, where the lecturer had given an example that could not be explained further in terms of the notes, sometimes a student would want to get an explanation from other students. There could be an activity that he would do to group them in the classroom so that they could discuss further some of the notes that he had presented just as an overlap, even in terms of weight, languages, difficulty, they were able to converse in their own language.</p> <p>How do they then fill up this gap? This question came up while he was doing his interviews. But once they said they really did not prefer the blended learning to the printed way of learning where the lecturer will still be available, they also raised a question of how do they offer that balance? How do they offer choices to still maintain or give students the ability to still be able to come to class for those who would like to engage in class? And what about those who would like to learn online? How do they strike a balance? Perhaps the blended way of learning was what was working better because some students felt intimidated to ask questions in a video during zoom classes, for example.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Should the definition of open learning change and is the definition inclusive enough?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that some of the confusion that was coming up from the lecturers was that the definition was so broad that it is creating some confusion. The suggestion in terms of the policy was that some of the answers might lie on the ground. There could be training or open dialogues to shape this definition, and how do they</p>

	<p>interact with institutions and lecturers in terms of speaking to them when shaping these policies so that they are a part of the concepts such as Open Learning? That sharpens the understanding and could encourage uptake and make the implementation of these policies much easier on the ground.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Did the presenter think that it was possible to align Open Learning models and flexibility within every cycle structured institution, with academics, staff and being funded?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that his research cases essentially explored that. Looking at whether it was possible to subscribe to Open Learning principles through a military response, this essentially entailed that, within the limitations of those institutions, they were looking at how they were able to explore Open Learning, specifically, designing with increased flexibility. His presentation essentially focused on how flexibility was being exploited, taken up under the banner of Open Learning. It was possible to align to a certain extent, but at the same time, they needed to acknowledge that within very cycle-structured institutions, transformative change would be required. They had to look at how they fully worked towards opening up learning that might take radical and transformative change. There might be substantial policy changes that were needed to accommodate Open Learning goals.</p>

QUESTIONS TO MS ZUNGU

<p>QUESTION: Did the presenter think that some of the major reasons that some students preferred contact classes as opposed to remote or rather online learning despite the risk of contact classes was the lack of interaction between students and teachers?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that the study was located during the COVID-19 pandemic and which falls on online interaction. The lack of inter-activeness was specifically even what one of the lecturers raised, that many of the students did prefer contact classes because they were able to interact not only with the lecturers but also with fellow students.</p>
<p>QUESTION: How do they fill up this gap?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presented stated that this question came up while she was doing her interviews in terms of how have they been able to fill up that gap but what they have raised is that they really prefer the blended way of learning where the lecturer was still available. The lecturer suggested that it would be better for them to still be available at the office and</p>

	for learners to still have access to the lecturers' consultations.
QUESTION: What is a Policy suggestion on the refinement of the Open Learning definition?	ANSWER: The presenter stated that the confusion that was coming up from the lecturers was that the definition was so broad that it was creating some confusion, so she thought the suggestion there in terms of policy was some of the answers might lay on the ground so a suggestion would be for training or dialogue when shaping the definition.

4.5. WEBINAR 5: INCLUSIVITY IN PSET

4.5.1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET

Ms van Wyk greeted everyone and extended a warm welcome to the fifth and final webinar. She briefly went through the background, format and aims of the Colloquium, commenting on the effects of COVID-19 and how Open Learning was more relevant than ever. The most important challenge at the time was to find the most cost-effective way to increase access and success within the PSET system. This could only be achieved by removing barriers to learning.

Ms van Wyk went on to briefly outline what had already been presented in the first four webinars before explaining that the fifth webinar would be focused on the PSET system as it integrated with the COOL research project. She again thanked the EU for their sponsorship of the COOL project and congratulated everyone on a job well done.

She introduced Prof Linda Cooper from UCT, the keynote speaker for the Session. Ms van Wyk then went on to introduce the remaining speakers of the webinar, Ms Gertrude van Wyk, Ms Sinethemba Zungu and Dr Pinky Mahlangu, followed by a Discussion Session with the presenters.

4.5.2. KEYNOTE ON RPL (A THEORETICAL MODEL) - A RPL THAT MAXIMISES INCLUSIVITY

Presenter: Prof Linda Cooper, Emerita Associate Professor, UCT

Prof Cooper's presentation explored a theoretical model of RPL. One of the key incentives driving this project was that although national policy and RPL had existed for some time, it was clear that they have relatively little implementation, particularly in the higher education field in South Africa. She hoped this project would reveal what was blocking RPL implementation and how to make the process as inclusive as possible.

Prof Cooper went on to make a distinction between RPL and Credit Accumulation Transfer (CAT) as used for admission into a programme and how RPL drew strongly on

experiential learning. A key feature was the assumption that knowledge was much the same or at least equivalent across contexts.

Prof Cooper went back to the beginning of her research in the late 1990s when the school curriculum was still outcomes-based and discussed the fierce debates between policymakers at the time. Even then, the question was how to make RPL inclusive. The key conclusion was to build a theoretical model, and her insights into the results were interesting. They accepted that experiential knowledge was not necessarily the same as or even necessarily a good platform for entering higher education but had the sense that they should not conflate the sort of knowledge with the complexity of knowledge. There was a need to be mindful of critiques of the dominant Western epistemology and that there should not be an exclusive value placed on scientific forms of knowledge.

The position of recognising the differentiated nature of knowledge had several implications for those engaged in RPL. The main takeaway was that one size does not fit all, which was why some study fields lend themselves better to RPL than others.

Prof Cooper concluded her address by mentioning research done by a Canadian colleague to study the feasibility of RPL of five different undergraduate programmes. The important points coming out of the Canadian test study was that the structure, the knowledge and the planning of the curriculum were factors affecting the feasibility of RPL. There were several other factors, such as the willingness of lecturers to engage with RPL and the existence of professional regulatory bodies. Prof Cooper used this to create three different models: the translational model, the navigational model and the dialogical model. These captured the nature of RPL.

Prof Cooper closed by saying that RPL needed to be an opportunity to enrich their knowledge base as a catalyst for building a knowledge archive in higher education that was more open, inclusive, enriched and rigorous.

4.5.3. INSTITUTIONAL BEST PRACTICES IN PROVIDING ‘INCLUSIVE EDUCATION’ TO STUDENTS - MOTHEO TVET COLLEGE

Opening Up Learning to Students Living with Disabilities at Motheo TVET College: A Social Justice Perspective

Presenter: Ms Gertrude van Wyk, Teacher and Researcher, and Doctoral student, Western Kentucky University

Ms van Wyk presented her case study on providing inclusive education to all students, especially persons with disabilities. The key concepts were Open Learning and disability access. She went on to quote prior policies that had been tweaked to support students with disabilities, although there was little evidence of implementation of disability policies in TVET Colleges in South Africa.

The research question for this case study was how Motheo TVET College had opened up learning to students living with mobility, visual hearing, communication, intellectual, emotional, or multiple impairments. The methodology involved a qualitative case

study. The environment did seem visibly suitable, with signs, large screens, and so on. Motheo TVET College did not have its own accommodation facilities, and students had to either use public transport or arrange a taxi at their own cost. Municipal roads and pavements were not really disability-friendly.

Her recommendations were that the college should continue engaging with international partners so that students living with disabilities gained access to whatever their needs were.

They could consider building disability-friendly accommodation and provide additional tuition funding for students living with disabilities. The municipalities need to improve the state of roads and pavements. Employers should hire qualified people living with disabilities. Ms van Wyk closed with thanks and acknowledgements to all involved.

4.5.4. ADDRESSING ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL INJUSTICES FACED BY STUDENTS THROUGH STUDENT SUPPORT - ELANGENI TVTE COLLEGE

Exploring how Student Support Services (SSS) Address Economic, Cultural, and Political Injustices: A Case Study of the Elangeni TVET College

Presenter: Ms Sinethemba Zungu, Researcher, UKZN

Ms Sinethemba Zungu presented her study on exploring how SSS addressed economic, cultural, and political injustices, drawing from insights on the Elangeni TVET College. This study was triggered by the need for South African education institutions to cater to the needs of the diverse student population. The underlying idea was to understand student support models and the extent to which they considered economic inequalities, cultural and social diversity, inclusive representation and decision making. This was a qualitative study, employing semi-structured Zoom interviews and WhatsApp discussions with two students and three staff members. The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown posed some limitations. Ms Zungu then expanded on these discussions and the interesting points that were raised, such as students without laptops not seeing Open Learning as part of SSS. There was an absence of technological support, although staff were willing to go over and above to assist students.

Ms Zungu recommended that further development was needed on the Open Learning Policy framework to align it with the annual strategic plans and SSS. The research could be expanded to glean further insights from TVET management, especially the curriculum heads

Ms Zungu sent her appreciation to the DHET for initiating this crucial study and to the staff and students at Elangeni TVET College who participated in this research, as well as the COOL team for all their support. And finally, to Professor Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams for her consistent patience and unconditional support.

4.5.5. RESEARCH AND PILOT ON NTOMBI VIMBELA: A PROMISING SEXUAL INTERVENTION FOR FEMALE TERTIARY STUDENTS ON SOUTH AFRICAN CAMPUSES

Presenter: Dr Pinky Mahlangu, Specialist Scientist, South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

Dr Mahlangu presented her formative research that they had conducted, where they developed and piloted the Ntombi Vimbela intervention. This was a Sexual Violence Intervention for female students on South African campuses. She presented the background on how young women in higher education in South Africa were at an increased risk of experiencing Gender-Based Violence (GBV). While DHET had been great in putting measures in place, there were still gaps and, therefore, a lot of work to be done.

Information was collected using various activities, such as conducting a mixed-methods formative research study and using the findings to develop an intervention that targeted female students, particularly the first-year undergraduate students, between the ages of 18 to 30. The research team then went to the colleges themselves, where the Ntombi Vimbela intervention was piloted through workshops with young women to test the viability and accessibility of the intervention. The methodologies were formative research, qualitative research, male focus group discussions and interviews.

The findings revealed that 20% had experienced sexual violence in the past year, with TVET participants being the most vulnerable. Issues arose around food security for TVET students and childhood abuses that affected their outlook at student age. It also showed the high mental health issues that female students were experiencing. It appeared that perpetration was driven by the acceptance of patriarchal social gender norms. There were issues of poor safety and security in some of the campuses, with hotspot areas. Staff were overloaded and overwhelmed.

Dr Mahlangu went on to identify modifiable risk factors, such as sensitising young women about the risk of sexual violence and discussing gender norms. She used a Canadian project that had worked well and a steppingstones intervention that was tested in the Eastern Cape and other settings in South Africa and found to be effective to address sexual GBV. These, together with new content derived, helped create the Ntombi Vimbela intervention, which went to eight sites where they implemented. The progress was evaluated after one year.

Dr Mahlangu then addressed how they taught young women how to protect themselves. There was a session that focused on sex and consent, another on men and relationships, and women and relationships. They talked about violence against women and how to support somebody who had experienced violence. There was a session on maintaining well-being – there were many more aspects to this comprehensive and highly successful intervention workshop.

Ntombi Vimbela was very relevant amongst young women. It was something that they could relate to. It was appropriate for first-year female students. Working with students

support staff in the institution to deliver intervention went well. Female students felt empowered. They felt much more confident to be able to resist, but if somebody failed to resist and they encountered a situation, they know how to resist using the self-defence strategies or skills that they were taught.

Dr Mahlangu closed by saying that they were planning an intervention for male students in higher education institutions and working with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI) community.

4.5.6. DISCUSSION

QUESTIONS TO PROF COOPER	
<p>QUESTION: How to ensure that RPL becomes optimally inclusive rather than a tool for exclusion. If we look at RPL and inclusivity, how does the model apply to people with disabilities?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that they had a programme offered through their medical faculty at UCT, which focused specifically on disability studies. They were attempting to draw people who had been disability activists specifically into that programme. And she was drawn into a system to put in place an RPL process into that programme. It was one of the most successful examples of RPL, partly because they took a great deal of trouble in the RPL process in making allowance for the needs of people with different kinds of disabilities. It would be considering and providing alternative ways of expressing themselves and of engaging with learning. What they were most struck by was the incredible richness of the knowledge that those disability activists were able to bring into the programme. They rewrote a large part of the curriculum based on those experiences of the RPL candidates who had a mass of experiential knowledge but a level of formal training.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Does micro-credentials have a role to play in the practice and offering of RPL models and options?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that she found it incredibly interesting in terms of the kinds of possibilities that had been offered. Certainly, in the European context, micro-credentials were used quite extensively to build what they call skills passports. And it is an EU-recognised portfolio of competencies and abilities. And people use both to seek employment across the EU. But interestingly, it is also used as a route into higher education, through RPL. It has been piloted and used there, it would be a great research project to explore its use in our own context.</p>
<p>QUESTION: For students entering academic studies,</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter responded that this question was partially answered in the Chat forum.</p>

are there successes that the presenter knew of in implementing RPL for access to studies?

There were many examples, but she realised that they needed to have actual data on which to base answers. Perhaps the most successful example of students into the undergraduate study and the rates of success were found in a chapter of a book that she had mentioned and that she had put up in the chat, i.e. a study of RPL into undergraduate study at UWC. What made that particularly successful was the institutionalisation of the appeal process. It had its own unit; it ran a very structured process of three months for portfolio development. The key answer lay in the kind of support and rigour with which that RPL process took place. In the chapter in the book, they talked about the numbers who initially showed interest in RPL. And they talked about well over 1,000 per year. The numbers dwindled to about 300 after a whole lot of advisory work had taken place. The numbers that came through the course successfully were about 100 or 120. It is very feasible, but it needs a lot of support and careful planning to ensure success.

QUESTION: What is the best approach of training RPL practitioners within the pivot sector to create broader accessibility of society?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that she was pondering an earlier question about how to take forward RPL in a regulated environment. And she was thinking of all the pieces that needed to be in place in order to ensure that it worked smoothly. She thought that staff training would be one of the most important elements. They had some examples of RPL facilitator training courses. There was one, for example, offered by the Cape Higher Education Consortium as one of the modules within the broader Diploma for Higher Education lecturers. There were others that were around. She had just been involved with an initiative with the International Labour Organisation, where they had developed an online course for RPL facilitators anywhere in the world. She thought that their own approach was that it did not have to be a theoretically heavy course. But she thought that the assumptions about learning and about knowledge that needed to be met, understood and made by the RPL facilitators were just as important as introducing them to various practical tools like portfolios and other kinds of tools that could be used in the training of appeal facilitators.

QUESTION: How could RPL be regulated regarding the past model timeframes, moderation of processes, etc., to help ensure that it is used effectively within a standardised manner?

ANSWER: The presenter answered that in order to answer this question, she wanted to refer briefly to some work that she had been involved in with a colleague, Alan Ralphs, advising a small high education institution and putting a not-for-profit institution in place. The answer to the question lies in a whole institution approach. In other words, they should not see RPL as some kind of outside addition to what an institution should be doing; it really should be integrated with all the systems. She agreed with the previous speaker, just about not seeing it as part of the way the institution works as a whole. So what they had been working on was not only putting a policy in place for the institution, but looking at how the information services, the marketing of the institution, includes RPL, how the advisory services for students included trained staff, who could advise students on RPL, integrating an RPL application system with the usual application system, and a lot of staff training, both for academic and for administrative staff.

They have put in place two modules, which count for credit, and involve the candidate enrolling for the module and, in the process of completing the module, producing a portfolio. Integrating it with the institutional process as a whole means that it gets an efficient approach, but also that it gets quality assured along with all the other processes that were regularly quality assured. Even though one could achieve quite a high degree of efficiency and also quality assurance, at the end of the day, she really did think that they needed to see RPL as a pedagogic engagement, where one has to work to assist each student to the surface and identify and profile their prior learning. And that does take time. It takes careful thought on the part of the staff.

QUESTION: With RPL, is almost always a skills knowledge training gap when compared to academic studies? Is it mainly due to the previous disadvantage of the learning? Or is it due to just the rigid qualification system in South Africa?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that it was something that she thought they had really struggled with. Certainly, for all the years that she had been engaged with RPL, there would always be a gap. She did not like the terminology of the gap because it suggested a deficiency, which was very often not the case. It is more a question of a non-alignment between what the RPL candidate was bringing and what the curriculum was

demanding. If they could see it like this, then they could also see ways in which to connect those two and very often, that might involve a bit of extra learning on the part of the RPL candidate. But equally, it might be that the curriculum itself needed to be slightly adjusted to allow a bit of engagement between those coming in, particularly if there were quite large numbers coming in via RPL into a module. The disability studies course that she mentioned was exactly that – they had large numbers of appeals students, and they adjusted the curriculum in order to really make the most benefit out of the knowledge that was brought in. But she thought that occasionally, there was a 'gap' in the real sense of the word; in other words that the candidate was able to cope in some ways but might not be able to cope in others. And in that case, the advisors needed to do some kind of catch up in some area of the knowledge and skills.

QUESTIONS TO DR MAHLANGU

QUESTION: What is the best way that they could sensitise and empower men to change behaviour so that they could curb GBV in the institutions?

ANSWER: The presenter stated that behavioural change was a very difficult process. But from their side, what they have identified is some of the activities that we could do, which we think could work, such as engaging men in gender-transformative workshops, where they sit with them. Sometimes we take for granted how much some people were not exposed to positive messages and education, even simple things like sex and consent. One of the things that they are planning to do as a next step was to do focus group-wide discussion workshops, where they sit together as they did with the young women and go through the very small, simple things about gender, like what is GBV? What are sex and consent? What do they mean when they say, respect women? However, she could not say for sure that that would change behaviour; it is a very complicated process, which might not just happen through the workshops. These would just be the first steps that would engage in and see how the process goes. Gender transformation workshops are one of the

	key things that they are planning to do with young men.
QUESTION: Is the presenter's report based on an article? And are the manuals that the presenter mentioned available for use in institutions?	ANSWER: The presenter indicated that they had publications and general articles where they had written about it. But they were also just finalising their manual.

QUESTIONS TO MS ZUNGU

<p>QUESTION: SSS in a TVET College could play a much bigger role in opening up learning, especially opening access to education and removing barriers to learning. SSS should not be seen as Open Learning and competency of only the curriculum unit. Is this the presenter's observation and what needs to be done to increase and to open up learning for all students at TVET Colleges?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that there was a previous comment regarding Open Learning and access to technology, so she would respond to both comments. She agreed that Open Learning went beyond technological access. Just a reminder that, while doing the research, TVET Colleges were in the national lockdown, and students were at home. There was a lot of pressure around students' reports at that time, and when she spoke to SSS and staff at the college, they were under a lot of pressure and were not sure where they were in terms of supporting students' mobility. This raises the challenge of being able to give students sufficient support, remotely. This was also a consequence of linking academic support to teaching and learning. Those were also some of the questions that she was still grappling with as she went through the data.</p> <p>Moving to the next comment about Open Learning, she would not perceive it as a responsibility of a certain person or an Education Department. It is not an added workload, but is more of a way of doing things. And it is not merely a set of principles, but a way or a movement of how they could create a more socially just environment in the TVET sector. During the research, when students were engaging with students who were at home and looking for student support from a broader scale, how do they support students from home from within their communities? How does the college, as an institution, interact with other government services within the area? How do they then use municipalities or communities where the students</p>
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	<p>were situated? Perhaps, how do they look at Open Learning as a form of student support within those areas? Those were all some of the questions or subjects that she had been coming up with and looking at literature. In a wider societal context for students, she would be more than excited to see a bigger scale of this research in terms of SSS and open learning.</p>
<p>QUESTION: Open Learning is mainly confused with e-Learning and other technology terminology. And the part of removing barriers to entry is overlooked by focusing more on the gadgets and on technology and on ICT and so forth. Does it go beyond gadgets and access to the internet? And how do you address those other issues that are not about the technology access and about the cost of connectivity and so forth?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter indicated that she believed that student support goes much more beyond just technological access, or rather, technology, or digital access, or internet access – it is more on a broader scale.</p> <p>There was quite a bit that student support must now come in to support that diverse population. That may be economic; it could be cultural or social diversity. And it could be a political or inclusive representation and decision making. That is broadly stating some of the areas that one may anticipate some inequalities that SSS should look at addressing. For example, people who are older come into TVET institutions to further their academics. These are people who are coming into higher education for the first time, the first people in a family to access higher education. There, one may find some cultural challenges. That is why SSS must also come in to ensure that there is that equality in terms of access, not just to the digital or technology, but access to the cultural environment to support those students.</p>

QUESTIONS TO MS VAN WYK

<p>QUESTION: Students are not always willing to declare their disabilities. What could be done get students to declare the disabilities?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter suggested that there should be a workshop before the students get admitted into the TVET Colleges or even CET Colleges. She suggested polls across the board and that they have some workshops in gathering all the different levels of people and make them see the need for disclosing their disabilities, in the way of helping them in furthering their education, instead of thinking that they will be stigmatised. If these are only declared further along in the process, it gives the lecturers a problem because they never knew about it and were unable to help.</p>
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	<p>They still try to help, but at times, it is difficult because one could not go back and help in the past. She strongly recommended that they have these workshops in recruiting differently-abled people, and talk about it, maybe have clinical psychologists, professionals in every part of disability to address this.</p>
<p>QUESTION: What is the presenter's advice in terms of lecturer training for people with disabilities? How can they empower the lecturer for assisting and for supporting people with disabilities?</p>	<p>ANSWER: The presenter stated that it went back to hiring specific employees, but whatever the disability, she thought it was going to be difficult. But if there were people who were trained in such a type of disability, it would be helpful to look into that. Maybe the college could identify these people through the applications, but she strongly suggested that there should be some training done for the lecturers in different aspects of differently-abled people, trying to make their lives more familiar with what they should expect in classes or what they should expect from this differently-abled students. But she thought this training was already in place, and it came up in her interviews.</p>

QUESTIONS TO ALL PRESENTERS

<p>QUESTION: Should we make Open Learning practices implementable at all institutions? How to implement it at institutions? How do we make it practically possible? Should we have recommended advocacy and communication, more workshops with people and also expanding research?</p> <p>Is there research that has been done in the CET sector? We only hear about universities and TVET Colleges, but do not hear anything about the CET sector. To each presenter, what research gaps must we look at to make it more implementable and more</p>	<p>ANSWER FROM DR COOPER: The question about the CET Colleges was really interesting and important one because it has been neglected. What she had found interesting from some of the initial research done on the CET Colleges is how many of them were bringing in or attracting youth who had dropped out of school but who wanted to now come back and finish. In the future, the CET College sector could play an enormous role for out-of-work youth who might never have a formal job in their lives. It is an interesting area to research, what kind of knowledge they could bring to the institution and then how it could be linked to some kind of life path, if not a career path, that is sustainable for them in the future. The other really urgent research that needed to be done was tracer studies; they needed some large-scale studies of people who have actually gone through the RPL process, what their experiences were, what was the rate of success and what effect it had on the ability to succeed. They included that question in one or two of their small case studies that were</p>
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practical? How can we implement their presentation areas better?

published in the book. But there was a need for a much wider study that would be able to build confidence in the ability of RPL to be more inclusive.

ANSWER FROM MS ZUNGU: The presenter indicated that for her, what is important in terms of this topic, is that SSS was vital in higher education institutions, and not only for the role it played but in terms of opening access to the diverse population and fostering student success. Firstly, the upscaling of this research contributes positively in terms of having the potential to not only strengthen the DHET's plans for student support but also to strengthen the impact of student support on the ground and to assist in terms of creating awareness around Open Learning as a form of student support. She believed that this was an under-researched area and would play a really great role in terms of upscaling this research, creating awareness and building up to wider engagements with the implementers of, for example, the SSS plans, as well as the implementers of the DHET Open Learning Policy. It opens up that dialogue, and it starts those conversations and creates that awareness, which is much needed. And just in terms of looking at SSS, has that social justice an intention of creating an environment in higher education, an environment where there is an equal footing among students, and being able to harness such an environment for students' success, regardless of which path you have worked in before entering the tertiary environment?

ANSWER FROM DR MAHLANGU: The presenter stated that she thought that most of the research that had emerged in the past few years around GBV had mainly focused on women. One of the gaps, which she had also alluded to in her presentation, was the focus on men and on the LGBTQI students. As they develop these interventions, they should also not leave those groups behind because they also experience high levels of sexual violence. But as they understood some of these gender norms that were driving the perpetration of violence, they also needed to think about mental health. Mental health was one of the key research areas that needed to be explored in

GBV research for all the groups, both women and men in the LGBTQI. One of the things in terms of the practical steps that could be done around addressing GBV was to make sure that in all the institutions, they provide orientation around GBV. As students come into the institutions, they need to make sure that they are all sensitised around GBV in its varied and scope in terms of the component itself. They needed to consistently and continuously conduct workshops around GBV. And the CET? Yes, they were taking that as an invite. This was just a pilot, not that they had excluded CET Colleges, they were going there, and they were looking forward to working with the CETs, TVETs and the universities. Hopefully, in the next funding that they will get, they will be able to include them all. So just to summarise, mental health was very important, very critical. They also needed to work with the LGBTQI.

ANSWER FROM MS VAN WYK: The presenter stated that the pending issue here was about the employers outside the TVET Colleges. She was not so sure how this could be dealt with. She would asked the panel to give some input in this, or even the delegates, in trying to meet the students' needs outside the college. She really did not know what it was that could be done because employers differ. She was aware that they were running out of resources, funding was a problem in the country. But she would strongly suggest that if differently-abled students could somehow have the infrastructure built for them to be accommodated within the campus itself, to avoid spending on transport that would help. With the resources available, they could do so much for their differently-abled students.

5. CASE STUDIES ON OPEN LEARNING

Chairperson: Ms Trudi van Wyk, Acting DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET

Ms van Wyk noted that the Session would provide an overview of the case studies of the COOL project as well as provide feedback from the webinar series. There was also a presentation by Higher Health on the impact of COVID-19 on the youth.

5.1. OVERVIEW OF THE CASES ON OPEN LEARNING PROJECT

Presenter: Dr Tabisa Mayisela, Lecturer and Principal Investigator for the COOL Project, University of Cape Town (UCT)

The presenter began by outlining the project's aims of investigating the uptake of Open Learning in the PSET sector and strengthening the research capacity of young researchers. Researchers who had just completed their Masters' degrees or PhDs were recruited into the project. They were engaged in various activities and were expected to write a research proposal. Those who were going to be engaging with people from higher education institutions had to navigate those spaces. Together, they worked on the qualitative data analysis, which they wrote up under guidance from their mentors.

She added that they had to engage in exploration, dissemination, publication of research, and presentations. They were also producing 16 knowledge service booklets, one for each case study. The chapters produced would be peer-reviewed. These will be downloadable and available on National Open Learning System (NOLS).

The researchers considered Open Learning and how it related to open education and then looked at what was the difference between the two. Open Learning was happening within formal education circles, whereas open education involved the use of OER and OEP; it included non-formal as well as informal education.

She noted that they drew on Nancy Fraser's framework and understanding, along with other social justice theorists. The methodology was to contact the identified sites that showed some elements of Open Learning practices. The scoping researcher had to dig deeper before they made the final decision. For data generation, they had one desktop study and 15 cases that used interviews and focus groups. To collect data, they did an inductive as well as a productive form of analysis. They had between seven and eight colleges, six universities, two cases that interviewed the head office personnel, and one international study.

The presenter went on to explain the insights they gained from the research relating to DHET policies, including disability, student support and RPL policies. They looked at reasons when looking for a transformative responsive response, we often did not consider the causes of social justice, along with several other barriers, such as the lack of access to non-digital material, the physical spaces that they needed for the curriculum, and the lack of reliable access to digital infrastructure.

She then moved on to financial constraints and the execution of fundraising, and even sourcing funding from external agencies, and how this would help in reducing costs for students.

In terms of qualifications, there was a way of increasing access through the use of micro-credentials, as well as RPL, and we need structures that could help facilitate that. Finally, in terms of the past experience of content-based transmission, institutions

had some type of student-centred pedagogies, such as collaborative development of students.

The presenter concluded with suggestions for earmarking secure and sufficient funding for the PSET sector, multilingual teaching, promotion of student-oriented pedagogy in a diversified curriculum, having distributed leadership and enabling a sense of agency among the people at various sites. There are institutions that were implementing Open Learning. But due to the fluidity of this phenomenon, some institutions might not really associate their practices with Open Learning. However, they needed to support institutions.

She thanked the team at the Centre for Innovation and Learning and Teaching (CILT), her colleagues, the project manager, the research and publications manager, the researchers and lastly, committees that allowed permission to collect research at the institutions.

5.2. FEEDBACK FROM WEBINARS

5.2.1. WEBINAR 1: INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Summary by: Prof Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams, Emeritus Associate Professor, UCT

Prof Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams was the primary investigator on the project and was now a consultant to the project. She summarised what each presentation was about.

In terms of findings, Sarah Black suggested that the conditions that supported Open Learning were the same conditions that supported any institutional health and functionality. These included policy change, looking at it pre-emptively, anticipating it, providing clean financial audits, taking calculated risks, allocating roles and resources strategically, managing outputs with DHET and other colleges, following robust appointment processes, and identifying the key lynchpins of academic success.

Mukhtar Raban's key findings showed that leadership to support e-Learning or ICT mediated learning was aligned to visionary leadership with traces of socially just leadership. He developed a model, which included undertaking a thorough contextual analysis, envisioning the desired outcome and then enacting the vision. His key recommendations were that the institutions should increase staff engagement and representation, that, mismatch should revisit the eligibility criteria, and the DHET should revisit the policies that constrain online assessment and moderation practices.

Susan Gredley's work was on fundraising at UWC, and her key focus was on novel fundraising activity, a phonathon, where students were involved in asking people from the community and alumni for funds for the institution, and particularly for academically deserving students. But it was a small scale and a stopgap strategy. However, it did have some other benefits. She suggested significant and sustained funding for computers and that institutional fundraising should only be the cherry on the top. The key recommendations were to make sure that people had cultivated an awareness of the complexity of the institutional context and that DHET offered more students access to real-world learning development opportunities.

Finally, Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj helped participants to understand WIL, particularly for TVET College staff. TVET Colleges were already working together to identify some local WIL placements. Teachers were provided with bursaries, and the DHET had arranged international placements. The use of micro-credentials were recommended, as well as continuing to foster the partnerships, both locally and internationally, and to institutionalise the pilot projects.

5.2.2. WEBINAR 2: LECTURER DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Summary by: Prof Mpine Makoe, Chairholder, Commonwealth of Learning in OER/OEP

Prof Mpine Makoe shared her thoughts on the day's proceedings, saying that it got her thinking, especially about who was responsible for what and who needed to do certain things differently in order for them to move to the online open space. She discussed the principles behind open spaces and how it is digital, and it was something they had not experienced before. It required technologies, devices, the know-how and the skills to teach in an online space. It was collaborative and student-centred.

She briefly reviewed the traditional system that we inherited, how it had affected education in South Africa, and how it did not fit into the new open digital spaces evolving at that time. The power of energy was invested in creating an environment where innovation will thrive. We expected people to be innovative, but did not allow people to be innovative. The system was complex, but it needed it to be adaptive as and when it was needed. Her two recommendations for government and institutions was to actually start OEP and this could only work if we refocused our attention on teaching and learning and the role of universities. The role of government was to provide resources for teaching and learning to encourage academics to refocus on teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning needed to be rewarded the same way as research was rewarded. Community engagement should also be rewarded. The DHET and all other departments must come up with a plan of developing ICT infrastructure so that everybody has equitable access to connectivity. We cannot have a system as it is now and then put digitalisation on top of it. Systems and structures are needed to support Open Learning and be flexible.

DHET should train staff on how to teach in higher education and how to teach using the digital environment. If we want open education systems and OER to thrive in our environment, we need to make fundamental changes from the government to the institution.

5.2.3. WEBINAR 3: OPEN LEARNING THROUGH A NEW QUALIFICATIONS PERSPECTIVE

Summary by: Dr Rooksana Rajab, Senior Associate, JET Education Services

Dr Rajab provided a summary of the presentations. First, Mr Christoph Vorwerk shared his research with composites, where he conducted research on micro-credentials for the advanced composites industry. His plea at the end of his presentation was for two things: for the NQF to make space for thought skills programmes as a form of flexible learning and career pathing. His main recommendation was that we should be progressive in how we applied digital badges in the learning systems.

The second presentation was from Ms Barbara Jones, who discussed her research on micro-credentials and digital badges as well as adding how this could contribute to social justice in the higher education field. Her findings were that micro-credentials could be stackable. It addressed prior learning and could therefore address inequities of the past. Her main point and recommendation were that university leadership take this up with mobility and trends internationally.

Next was Susan Gredley, who discussed RPL on enabling access to higher education. Despite several years of RPL projects being implemented, it still remained time-consuming, costly, and labour intensive. The key outcome of her study was how RPL could be better implemented, well resourced, quality-assured, and needed to be well understood as a pedagogy. She added that it was not a one size fits all.

Dr Heidi Bolton mentioned several RPL initiatives in several sectors, where they have been successfully implementing RPL and went through all the techniques and tools such as what was implemented at CPUT. She emphasised that funding and resources were an issue.

Next were Messrs Nel, Radu and Vasudev, who shared the individual roles within a sector and how they used some of the policies that were developed for student mobility, such as evaluation of qualifications and international liaison with SAQA.

In conclusion, Dr Rajab said we are great in policy development in South Africa, but are unable to implement the policies. We do not allocate enough funding for RPL. There are pockets of good practice both for RPL and credentials, but we are slow to scale up these practices. We conduct large amounts of research, have many case studies and provide evidence of sometimes what is already known, but cannot fund this research adequately. When we do fund research, we define principles, but do not monitor the change or the impact that it is making in society for the citizens. She closed by suggesting we go the credentials route. Invest in goals, scale-up and be innovative. We should open up the learning pathways and find quick wins with micro-credentials so that we could address inequality and social justice and recognise knowledge and experience in a credible way, allow learner mobility, and keep up with international trends while we find our own solutions.

5.2.4. WEBINAR 4: FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Summary by: Prof Francois Strydom, Senior Director, UFS

Prof Francois Strydom gave feedback on the webinar chaired by Dr Thandi Lewin. He briefly outlined what each researcher presented, then started by saying there was a dire need for basic learning infrastructure. Across all institutions in the PSET sector, we need to ensure that all PSET staff and students have access to basic learning infrastructure, which included appropriate devices, data and connectivity. There is a need for solutions for accommodation in PSET institutions and transport for the disabled. We need to prioritise digital skills development at an institutional and national level. Academic staff at the different institutions need to be trained on how to incorporate technology into the pedagogical approaches to promote social justice activities, institutions needed to invest in learning designs to help them weave in technology as part of pedagogy. We need flexible content delivery platforms that allow us to integrate textbooks and institutionally developed materials across different devices. From the identification data, it was very clear that NSFAS made a big difference with devices and data, which needed to be continued. TVET policies should provide more guidance on how the learning material allowance was structured to include laptop data revision. NSFAS needs to improve the effectiveness and efficiency so students do not suffer delays in payment that negatively affect their ability to learn.

He concluded that this was a time to reimagine learning and teaching in the PSET sector. Students and staff have learned valuable lessons about the benefits of technology and how it could be infused. Embracing technology offers an opportunity for PSET staff to redefine their role as teachers and for institutions to be more responsive, but also for students to become more self-reliant. Finally, policy development was very important. The quality assurance approaches would need to be adapted for more flexible learning approaches.

5.2.5. WEBINAR 5: INCLUSIVITY IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Summary by: Prof Linda Cooper, Emerita Associate Professor, UCT

Prof Cooper summarised the event starting with her keynote presentation, which introduced a theoretical model of RPL that emerged out of a cross-institutional research project, whose aims were to understand the 'inner workings' of RPL in order to optimize inclusivity. The key features of this model were:

- Recognition of the differentiation of knowledge – i.e. that “no one size fits all” and that some disciplinary areas were more amenable to RPL than others;
- There were a range of contextual factors that also impacted the feasibility of RPL;
- RPL should be seen as a 'specialised pedagogy' providing meta-cognitive tools for navigating across knowledge and language/discourse boundaries; and
- RPL brought in alternative forms of knowledge that could immensely enrich the curricula and knowledge archive.

There was interest amongst participants to read more about the theoretical model. There were also questions raised about: RPL and disability; whether they had statistics on rates of success; micro-credentials, and RPL; and how to implement RPL in a highly

regulated environment. All these and more could offer important new areas for research.

Ms Gertrude van Wyk provided insights on opening up learning to students living with disabilities. Her research findings stressed the importance of a supportive environment, dedicated staff and guidance services. Her case study showed that foregrounding the needs of students with disabilities was the responsibility not only of the college but also DHET, NSFAS, the SETAs, municipalities as well as employers. Discussions revealed the need for further research into the employability of students with disabilities.

Ms Sinethemba Zungu spoke about her research as part of the 'COOL' project, which explored how SSS addressed economic, political and social injustice. Her case study demonstrated that student services were generally not designed to support widening access via Open Learning. She stressed that Open Learning should be seen in a wider societal context and that the responsibility for this went further than student services – it should be a way of thinking and doing for the institution as a whole.

Dr Pinky Mahlangu from the MRC presented a paper based on her research on the risks of sexual GBV for first-year female students. The research included both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative results showed a clear link between high levels of the rise of sexual GBV and some important economic, interpersonal and personal factors, while the qualitative results demonstrated the important impact of socio-economic status as well as institutional factors. She concluded by sketching a pilot education programme that had emerged from the research. Dr Mahlangu pointed to the need for future research to go beyond women and to include men as well as the LGBTQI community.

Although the papers in this Session covered a diverse range of issues, all highlighted the intense significance in South Africa of the need to deepen inclusivity in education and training and drew great interest and positive feedback.

5.3. IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AMONG YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA, AND HOW TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE YOUTH'S USE OF THE INTERNET, MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE PANDEMIC

Prof Ramneek Ahluwalia, CEO, Higher Health

The presenter discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic among the youth in South Africa, the opportunities presented and the use of the internet, media and technology during the pandemic. He began with a slide presentation of the different waves of infection over a specific time period. He showed how these trends linked with the mode of teaching in TVET Colleges and pointed out that certain professions could not be taught online-only, such as medicine, mining, engineering – they all required practical understanding. Contact learning had its own relevance.

The pandemic had taught them to balance the academic year and plan forward in anticipation of the next big wave of infections (at the time of presentation, this was

the fourth wave, expected towards the end of 2021). The presenter discussed virus mutations and how they affected people. He also encouraged the participants to get vaccinated, as this could prevent future mutations of the virus and alleviate the pressure on the hospitals.

The presenter then went on to speak about the social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the youth in PSET education. Together with the DHET and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), a study was done across all institutions with interesting results. About two-fifths of students (40%) reported that they returned to their homes because of the COVID-19 outbreak. Less than one percent (1%) reported they had no place to stay. There were 37.5% that reported they were staying at home during the lockdown. Only 20.8% said they had a suitable space to study, while 29.3% of students had no suitable place to study during the lockdown. About 78% had regular access to electricity.

About half the students reported that their parents had lost their jobs, while the other half was worried it was still going to happen to their parents. Two-fifths said they were not able to purchase their own food, and 28.6% said they could only buy their own food sometimes. Food security was a new huge challenge for young people. There were 42.7% that said they accessed the internet using data bundles provided by the institutions, and 15% of the cheaper college students had no access to the internet. Seventy percent (70%) reported they had family support, 57% had friends as support, 43% had some parents support. A total of 65% of students experienced mild to severe psychosocial distress.

COVID-19 had been very hard on young people, academically, socially, and financially. Internet data access was an essential tool. But this raised an earlier question: How to teach medicine remotely? How to teach plumbing, electrical, mining, and engineering? They tried to minimise on-campus outbreaks by using the internet where they could. Testing could be done at home. Students were issued passports. Digital technology transformed them; to date, 15 million passports have been issued. And they were working with the Department of Health to link it to the vaccination passport.

With mental health posing a huge problem for 65% of their students, Higher Health established a 24-hour helpline, and their service providers made it toll-free for any student, any time. The helpline had a counsellor, a psychologist and a social worker. They had a curriculum for contact learning; they call it an extra curriculum and covered sexual reproductive health, mental health, GBV, domestic violence, partner violence, disability, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, drugs, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and COVID-19.

Incident numbers were increasing daily and on-site testing screening needed to continue. And it could continue through an online platform to an Open Learning platform. Higher Health would be piloting the second curriculum as an animated

student friendly online curriculum to 200, 000 first-year students who would be certified in health and wellness. And when these students graduate, every workspace want to employ them because they are candidates who have a formal qualification but also mental health and coping 'qualification'.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Curriculum and Assessment: There is a need to review and revisit the policies that limit online assessment and moderation practices. Quality assurance approaches would need to be adapted for more flexible learning approaches. The curricula should be adapted so that it is a student-friendly online curriculum. There is a need for flexible content delivery platforms that allow for the integration of textbooks and institutionally developed materials across different devices.
- Training: There is a need to train academic staff on how to teach in institutions using the digital environment. Academic staff need to be trained on how to incorporate technology into the pedagogical approaches to promote social justice activities.
- RPL: Implementation is time-consuming, costly, and labour intensive. RPL must be better implemented, resourced, and quality assured. There is a need to consider scaling up of good practice based on the findings of research that have already been done.
- Micro-credentials: We need to recognise knowledge and experience in a credible way and allow learner mobility. This could assist in addressing inequality and social justice.
- Infrastructure for teaching and learning: there is a need to ensure that all PSET staff and students have access to basic learning infrastructure, and this includes appropriate devices, data and connectivity.
- Health and safety: There is a need to continue with the development of strategies and initiatives that focus on the health and safety of students in PSET institutions. Special attention is needed on the mental health of students.
- Funding: There is a need for further engagement on the calculation of funding for blended, online and distance education.

6. CLOSING

Chairperson: Mr Samuel Zamokuhle Zungu, DDG, TVET, DHET

Mr Zungu introduced the Session, noting that there would be one presentation from Universities South Africa (USAf) reflecting on the overall Colloquium. He noted that there would also be a Way Forward from the DHET.

6.1. FLEXIBLE AND BLENDED LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES IN POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Presenter: Dr Linda Meyer, Director, Operations, USAf

In her presentation, Dr Meyer thought it would be pertinent to deal with issues that were non-traditional when considering the flexible and learning approaches they encountered within the higher education sector.

COVID-19 taught us a myriad of lessons about pedagogical techniques and how best to apply what we saw during this period. Flexibility was about the freedom to learn anywhere and anytime. And blended meant what combination works best for students to access teaching and learning opportunities. And peripheral to that, the assessment constructs largely influenced how students were assessed for accreditation.

The presenter stated that they could not speak about e-Learning anymore – it is completely outdated. We have moved to ubiquitous learning because learning has unfolded and enveloped all constructs. She explained what all of these things meant in the broader context and the opportunities presented. She covered micro and macro credentialing, flexible learning pathways, collaborations, and using social media as a primary form of communication.

A few disruptive thinking constructs had emerged during this flexible learning period around the creativity of scholars, and the reflexive competencies, which also emerged within the lecturer constructs, where we have seen collaboration and this needs to reflect on best ways of sharing knowledge. Flexible and blended learning required self-direction, ownership for learning, ownership for teaching, teaching opportunities, and ownership for transcending what the norm is.

She noted that the reality about open access and shared service platforms. We need to start forging a path with cost optimisation for long-term sustainability and not short term. Cost drivers inevitably always entered the fray of discussion. She presented some examples of how this was an enabling factor, citing some statistics. There were elements of transformation that needed to be formalised and harnessed when we speak about opportunities and diverse learning approaches. We are faced with particular challenges, and one is on how assessments needed to be underpinned by AI technology. We need to look to the future and if we embrace change; these elements of open access, transformation about authentic integration curriculum could become a reality.

6.2. WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Presenter: Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET

The presenter emphasised that the Research Colloquium addressed a fundamental question on how we could open up learning and teaching for every student in the education and training system. We have to focus on the student and need to apply Open Learning principles and approaches in the PSET system and remove the barriers to learning. We must focus on the student while we are planning or executing, teaching and learning. She then summed up what had transpired over the past few days in seven points:

- There is a need for policy alignment to Open Learning, alignment to the curriculum, the agility of the system (e.g. looking at micro-credentials), and recognition of learning and the RPL reality;
- The professional development of lecturers, including management and support personnel;
- The whole issue of ICT support by ICT infrastructure for both lecturer and students. This includes issues such as connectivity, the cost of connectivity, and the sustainability of ICT infrastructure;
- The issue of support, not only the support of management to lecturers and students in terms of teaching and learning, but also technical support, pedagogical support, social/ psychosocial support, and mental health support;
- The need for collaboration, full partnership, peer support, sharing experiences, sharing expertise, and sharing of OER;
- The link to the world of work. We do not prepare students for anything else other than to be a citizen of the world, to get a job and to succeed in the world of work; and
- The importance of research, and getting research evidence, our work must be based on evidence-based research.

The presenter extended her thanks to everyone for their participation and support in the active webinars and for the day's Colloquium.

6.3. VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSURE

Presenter: Mr Reineth Mgiba, A/Chief Director (A/CD), Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, DHET

The presenter stated it was a pleasure for him to be part of the 2021 Research Colloquium on “*Open Learning: Flexible and Blended Learning in Post-School Education and Training*”. He noted his gratitude for the opportunity to provide the Vote of Thanks.

He continued that the Colloquium usually takes place as a contact event on an annual basis. However, the 2020 Research Colloquium did not take place; it was a

challenging year because of the impact COVID-19 had in terms of the plans they had for that year.

He took the opportunity to thank participants for the commitment shown during the various webinars and the Colloquium. A special thanks was extended to:

- The NSF for funding of platform to host the virtual Colloquium and webinars;
- The partners, the DHET entities, including the SETAs, Quality Councils, SAQA, NSFAS, the HRDC and the NSA - for inputs during the planning of the event and for promoting the Colloquium on social media;
- The EU for providing funding for the research studies on Open Learning;
- The officials in the Policy, Research and Evaluation Directorate and Open Learning Directorate: Ms Renay Pillay, Mr Randall Faulmann, Ms Rakal Govender, Ms Gina Umeh, Ms Gerda Venter, Mr Robert Zondi, and Mr George Modiba. And Mr Nashveer Nemesar from the Communications Directorate;
- DDG Nolwazi Gasa and Ms Trudi Van Wyk, for their leadership and support;
- HP for providing the four laptops that have been used as prizes for the competition;
- All the presenters, local and international, for sharing insightful content during the Webinars and the Colloquium; and
- ForeFront for hosting the event.

GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Blended Learning	The term blended learning is generally applied to the practice of using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students
Distance Education	Distance education is defined as the practice of using correspondence, either written or virtual, to learn
e-Learning	A learning system based on formalised teaching but with the help of electronic resources is known as e-Learning. While teaching can be based in or out of the classrooms, the use of computers and the Internet forms the major component of e-Learning.
Flexible Learning	Flexible learning refers to the ability to customize one's pace, place and mode of learning. With pace, for example, students may take accelerated programmes or engage in part-time learning to ensure they have time to work on the side. Learning can take place in a variety of settings, including in the classroom, at home via the Internet, while commuting or as part of a work-study programme. Mode refers to the way that content is delivered by technology, typically through blended learning, fully online courses or technology-enhanced experiences.
Informal Education	Unplanned and spontaneous learning of behaviours, norms, and values, which typically occur outside of formal settings.
Non-Formal Education	The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all.
Open Education	Open education is not limited to just open educational resources. It also draws upon open technologies that facilitate collaborative, flexible learning and the open sharing of teaching practices that empower educators to benefit from the best ideas of their colleagues. It may also grow to include new approaches to assessment, accreditation and collaborative learning. Understanding and embracing innovations like these are critical to the long-term vision of this movement.
Open Educational Practices	Open Educational Practices comprises a set of skills in collaboration, curation, curricular design, and leadership around the use of Open Educational Resources.
Open Educational Resources	Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.
Phonathon	Telephone marathon where money is raised by calling donors or sponsors.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning is a process whereby people's prior learning can be formally recognised in terms of registered qualifications and unit standards, regardless of where and how the learning was attained.

PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT PROFILES

Programme Director

Ms Trudi van Wyk, A/DDG, Planning, Policy and Strategy, DHET



PROFILE

Trudi van Wyk is the CD: Social Inclusion and Quality in the Department of Higher Education and Training and is responsible for social inclusion and equity, NQF, Career Development Services, ICT in education and Open Learning. She has a background in e-Learning and was previously appointed as Education Specialist: eLearning at the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada, where she worked mainly with governments and institutions at strategic and implementation levels in the Caribbean, Africa, South-East Asia and Pacific to implement Open and Distance Learning, ICT and OER. She has 38 years' experience in education and training and published in the areas of OER, Digital health literacy, ICT in education and ICT competencies for teachers and lecturers.

Section One Chairperson

Dr Phil Mjwara, A/DG, DHET



PROFILE

Dr Phil Mjwara was appointed DG in April 2006. He is responsible for policy development in the Science and Innovation sector in South Africa. Prior to his appointment at the Department of Science and Innovation, Dr Mjwara was the Group Executive: Research and Development and Strategic Human Capital at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. In 2001, he joined the National Laser Centre as its head. He was instrumental in growing the Centre's activities from its inception and in creating a network of centres in Africa until 2005. Dr Mjwara's public sector career includes serving as Director of Technology Development at the former Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. His academic career includes serving as a Professor of Science and Technology Policy at the UP and Physics lectureships at the universities of the Witwatersrand, South Africa and Fort Hare.

He has been involved in the management of technological innovation as well as in processes for policy formulation. Dr Mjwara led the team that conducted the first South African technology foresight project. He has published and presented numerous papers relating to Physics, Technology Analysis and Foresighting. Dr Mjwara is one of the co-chairs of the Group on Earth Observations based in Geneva.

Section One Presenter

Mr Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation



PROFILE

Mr Buti Kgwaridi Manamela is the Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Science and Innovation. His previous portfolio was as Deputy Minister in the Presidency: Planning Monitoring and Evaluation, Youth Development and Administration. Deputy Minister Manamela has been a Member of Parliament since 2009, serving as Whip of the Labour Portfolio Committee; and as Chief Volunteer to parliament's Nelson Mandela Day.

Deputy Minister Manamela is a member of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party. He served as the National Secretary of the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA) from 2003 until 2014 and has also served in various roles in the ANC Youth League, South African Students Congress and various other student organisations. Deputy Minister Manamela also worked as an organiser for the trade union South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union in 2001. He completed his Matric in Phagameng High School and went on to study towards his N-Certificate in Electronics at Mamelodi College until 2001; and completed his Post-Graduate Diploma (2014) and Master of Management degree in Public Policy at the Wits (2017).

Section One Presenter

Prof Asha Singh Kanwar, President, CEO, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada



PROFILE

Professor Asha Singh Kanwar, one of the world's leading advocates of learning for sustainable development, is the President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning. Throughout a career spanning over 35 years, she has made outstanding contributions in the areas of teaching, research and international development.

Professor Kanwar received her undergraduate and Masters of Philosophy degrees from the Panjab University in India and a Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom (UK). Her areas of expertise include open distance and technology-enabled learning, OER, quality assurance, gender and organisational development. Professor Kanwar has written and edited a dozen books, published over 100 papers and articles, and delivered numerous keynotes at prestigious international conferences.

Prior to joining the Commonwealth of Learning, Professor Kanwar was a senior consultant in open and distance learning at UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa. She has also served as Director, School of Humanities and as Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the Indira Gandhi National Open University in New Delhi, India. She was a Fulbright Fellow for post-doctoral research at Iowa State University in the USA, where she was later invited to teach. Currently, she serves on the boards of several organisations, including the Governing Board of the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies and Education.

Professor Kanwar won several international awards, including the ICDE Prize of Excellence and the Meritorious Service Award for outstanding contributions in open and distance education from the Asian Association of Open Universities. She has been conferred eight honorary doctorates from universities in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

Section Two Chairperson

Mr Imraan Patel, DDG, Socio-Economic Innovation Partnerships, DSI



PROFILE

Mr Patel is a public policy and strategy manager with a focus on innovation, inclusive development, sustainability, social and economic development, and public management and governance.

Employed since 2006 at the DSI, he is currently a DDG and represents the department on the social and economic clusters of government. He is a current member of the board of the Water Research Commission, Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies and a past board member of Mintek and Southern African Science Service Centre for Climate Change and Adaptive Land Management.

Prior to joining the DST, he worked at the Centre for Public Service Innovation, an agency of government supporting innovation in the delivery of public services and the Department of Public Service and Administration. He began his working life with a five-year stint at the Workplace Information Group, an NGO supporting trade union, followed by three years during the formative years of the National Labour and Economic Development Institute, a think tank to Congress of South African Trade Unions.

At DSI, he is responsible for strategically driving a portfolio of investments and policies that advance the social and economic development priorities of government through science and technology-based interventions. Areas of focus include science and technology for sustainable development, Research and Development-led industrial development, green and circular economy, the science-policy interface, and the Next Industrial Revolution.

Section Two Presenter

Prof Mpine Makoe, Chairholder, Commonwealth of Learning, ER//EP



PROFILE

Prof Mpine Makoe is the Commonwealth of Learning Chair in OEROER/OEP and Research Professor in Open Distance e-Learning at the UNISA. She is a National Research Foundation rated researcher and an OER Ambassador of the ICDE. She is also a director of the African Council for Distance Education. Mpine serves as a Higher Education expert on the UNESCO Futures of Higher Education 2050 project. She is a sought-after scholar and has published extensively in technology-enhanced learning in Open Distance Learning (ODL). She has also done consultancy work for the Commonwealth of Learning, facilitating the development of ODL policies in different universities in Africa. She holds a PhD and Master's degree in Educational Technology from the Open University, UK. She also has a Master of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and English from Hope College in Michigan, as well as a Diploma in Journalism from Africa Literature Centre in Zambia. Mpine is actively involved in distance education associations nationally, regionally and internationally and is a member of the University Futures Network.

Section Two Presenter

Mr Peter van der Hijden, Independent Higher Education Strategy Advisor, Belgium



PROFILE

Peter van der Hijden is an independent higher education strategy advisor. He acts as a sparring partner, Board member, workshop moderator and inspirational speaker for public authorities, NGOs, companies, media outlets, and university and professional networks. Former European Commission Head of Sector: Higher Education Policy, Peter played a central role in developing the Erasmus programme, the Bologna Process, and the higher education modernisation agenda. He further contributed to the Horizon Rating and Investment framework programmes and to researcher mobility under the European Research Area. Peter studied law at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, where he started his career as vice-registrar of the university council and policy officer for education and research.

Recent assignments include positioning European University alliances (after an idea of President Macron), senior expert for a 2030 vision study on universities, the advisory board of Kiron Learning beyond limits (a Berlin-based NGO serving new audiences with online studies) and promoting micro-credentials as a new and flexible learning option for all (advisor to EC and organisations worldwide).

Section Two Presenter

Dr Ebba Ossiannilsson, ICDE OER Advocacy Committee (OERAC) and ICDE OER Ambassador for Global Advocacy, Sweden



PROFILE

Ebba Ossiannilsson from Sweden is a professor of innovation and open online learning. She is an independent expert, quality reviewer, influencer and researcher in the fields of open, flexible, online and distance learning. Her focus is on SDG4 and the futures of education, quality, resilience, leadership and personal learning. She is a member of most international and national organisations. At ICDE, she is a member of the Board, on the Quality Network, Chair of ICDE OER Advocacy Committee and ICDE OER Ambassador. She is also a quality reviewer for ICDE and the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities. She was the research leader for ICDE research on quality models in online and open education around the globe: State of the art and recommendations, and she was the researcher of ICDE Blended Learning: State of the Nation. Ossiannilsson is a member of the International Council on Badges and Credentials and chairs the Committee on Quality and Standard for Micro-credentials. She collaborates with the European Commission, UNESCO, COL, OEB and ITCILO. She has been awarded several fellowships and serves on the editorial board, and is a guest editor of several scientific journals. She has over 200 of her own publications. She is Vice-President of the Swedish Association for Distance Education and a board member of Job and Skills Coalition Sweden. She is a regular keynote speaker at conferences.

Section Three Chairperson

Mr Randall Faulmann, Director: Open Learning, DHET



PROFILE

Mr Faulmann is the Director of the Open Learning Directorate at DHET.

Section Three Presenter

Prof Gerrit Stols, Director of Education Innovation, UP



PROFILE

Professor Gerrit Stols holds the following qualifications: a Higher Education Diploma, a Bachelor of Science degree, including Honours, a Master of Science degree and a PhD. He is currently the Director of the Department for Education Innovation at UP. Before this, he was the Head of the Department of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education. His specific area of expertise, for which he has gained national and international recognition, is the innovative use of technology in mathematics education. In 2015, he spent a semester as a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Great Falls (UGF) in the USA, where he assisted with the internationalisation of the UGF's teaching programmes. Between 2011 and 2013, and again in 2016, he assisted the Naruto University of Education in Japan with the training of mathematics teachers and course facilitators. Professor Stols has published a range of articles in national and international journals and has supervised many masters and doctoral candidates to the successful completion of their studies.

Section Three Presenter

Ms Jenny Glennie, Director, SAIDE



PROFILE

Ms Glennie is the Founding Director of SAIDE, a not-for-profit organisation committed to increasing equitable and meaningful access to knowledge, skills and learning through the adoption of open learning principles, distance education methods and educational technology. As Director, she has overseen a variety of studies and interventions aimed at improving the contribution of distance education in South Africa and the region, including contributions to policy around modes of provision across different sectors. Over the last 13 years, she has played an important role in advocating open educational resources and demonstrating their crucial advantages, especially in SAIDE's ground-breaking initiatives –African Storybook and OER Africa. She was the founding president of South Africa's distance and open education association, the National Association of Distance Education Organisations of South Africa.

Ms Glennie was appointed by the Minister in 2013 to oversee the establishment of Sol Plaatje University through chairing the five-person Interim Council set up for this purpose and is currently the deputy chair of its Council. As a member of the Minister's Council on Higher Education, Ms Glennie was an active participant in the establishment of South Africa's first Higher Education Quality Committee and served for ten years as the Deputy Chairperson. She has received honorary awards from both the Commonwealth of Learning for her significant contribution to distance education and the UP for her contribution to education in South Africa. Ms Glennie has a Bachelor of Social Science Honours degree in Mathematics from Wits and a Master's degree from the University of London.

Section Three Presenter

Dr Nick Balkrishen, Regional Manager, Mpumalanga and North-West TVET and CET Colleges



PROFILE

Dr Nick Balkrishen is the Regional Manager of North West and Mpumalanga Region TVET and CET Colleges. He has a PhD in Educational Leadership and Management. His passion and area of expertise is teaching and learning and student achievement. Dr Balkrishen is the author of a reference book titled *Effective Campus Management*, which was published in 2016 and provided free of charge to all campus managers and College Principals in South Africa. He has been involved in education and training for 35 years and started as a teacher in 1985, moved through the ranks and became a School Principal before joining the TVET sector as a Deputy Principal Academic Affairs in 2003. In 2009, he was appointed as Principal and CEO of Gert Sibande TVET College. Under his leadership, Gert Sibande TVET College became renowned for its academic excellence and was often rated as the number-one performing college in South Africa. Dr Balkrishen strives to excel in all that he does. It was not surprising that he passed his honours degree cum laude and Master's degree cum laude. Dr Balkrishen is deeply committed and passionate about the plight of the African child and believes that high-quality education and training can play an important role in providing the youth with skills that can enhance their quality of life.

Section Four Webinar One Keynote Presenter

Mr Matias Matias, Global Education Specialist, Advisory Board Member, HP Foundation, HP Life Program HP Inc.



PROFILE

Matias has over 30 years' experience in the technology field. Through his work, he brings awareness to emerging trends in technology and education, particularly with regard to the challenges that nations may face in large-scale technology deployments. Matias consults with governments and not-for-profit organisations to deliver solutions for primary, secondary and tertiary education at scale. Matias has led nationwide consulting engagements and proof-of-concept deployments on four continents. These include ground-breaking mixed methods research projects in Indonesia, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Guatemala, all focused on improving education outcomes and long-term economic growth.

Section Four Webinar One Presenter

Dr Sara Black, Teacher, Analyst and Researcher, UJ



PROFILE

Sara Black has worked in public education for 12 years as a teacher, analyst and researcher. In August 2019, she submitted her PhD, which examines how key policies in the basic educator sector reproduce existing inequalities in high schools. She has also worked in teacher development, heading up the Newly Qualified Teachers Project at UCT for its first two years and mentoring pre-and in-service teachers across Cape Town. Her research interests include the privatisation of public education, the role of teacher unions in education leadership and change, education philosophy and critical policy sociology.

Sara is passionate about radical social justice and removing barriers to powerful ideas and knowledge. A bit of a nerd, she likes to read social theory and regularly participates in reading groups and popular education initiatives with other like-minded activists and scholars. In a prior life, she worked as a software developer in the private sector. When not hiding behind a book, she's normally found running the mountains with her hound, growing something pretty or tasty in her garden, or comfortably wedged behind a piano.

Section Four Webinar One Presenter

Mr Mukhtar Raban, Lecturer, NMU



PROFILE

Mukhtar Raban is a lecturer in the Faculty of Arts at Nelson Mandela University. After teaching in the English as a Second Language programme in colleges in the Middle East, he joined the university's Applied Language Studies department. His teaching practices focus on technology-enhanced language learning with a focus on blended learning and related pedagogies. He was awarded the university's 'Excellent Teacher of the Year' in 2015. His research interests include technology-enhanced learning, blended learning, digital humanities, and humanising and critical pedagogies. He has presented at local and international conferences and serves as an official learning and teaching advisor to the International Open University in Malawi and Gambia. He is currently reading towards a PhD in education with a focus on critical digital pedagogies for language learning and teaching.

Section Four Webinar One Presenter

Ms Susan Gredley, PhD candidate, UWC



PROFILE

Susan is a PhD candidate at the UWC; her doctoral research explores socially just pedagogies in Higher Education through the lens of participatory parity. She holds an Honours in English and a Master in Adult Education degree from UCT. Over the past ten years, Susan has worked in a range of academic roles and spaces at UCT and UWC. At UCT, she has been involved in teaching and convening roles in the Writing Centre, Disabilities Studies Unit, English Department, and the UCT Global Citizenship Programme. At UWC, she has for the past decade worked closely with the Women's and Gender Studies department in various teaching and research roles, most recently convening and lecturing on two of the undergraduate gender studies courses. Susan's work and studies at UWC and UCT have reinforced her interest in exploring socially just ways of teaching, learning and engaging with students who are in turn motivated to contribute to the urgent project of social transformation in South Africa. When not involved in academic pursuits, she loves running, reading, exploring local spaces, and quality time with her dog Lexi.

Section Four Webinar One Presenter

Dr Thasmai Dhurumraj, Lecturer, UJ



PROFILE

Thasmai Dhurumraj lectures in undergraduate and postgraduate in the Department of Science and Technology Education. Her qualifications are Bachelor of Science, majoring in chemistry and physiology, Postgraduate Certificate in Education with majors in Physical Sciences and Natural Sciences, a Bachelor of Education Honours degree majoring in educational leadership and management, Master of Education and PhD focus in Science Education – with a focus on teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge and professional development and its influence in the teaching of Sciences.

Section Four Webinar Two Presenter

Ms Mahlatse Maake-Malatji, PhD Student, UCT



PROFILE

Mahlatse was born and bred in the Northern Province, currently known as Limpopo. She attended her elementary school in Phalaborwa Primary School, Namakgale and completed her high school at Lebeko High School in Ga-Mashishimale village. She completed her Bachelor of Laws (Honours) at the University of Limpopo in 2016 and a Professional Master's degree (Labour Law) at the UCT in 2017. Mahlatse is currently a PhD student (Commercial Law) at the UCT. She has worked in various organisations and has skills including research, administration and teaching. She has worked as a Student Assistant at the UCT, a lecturer, coordinator and research assistant for a Dispute Resolution Course on behalf of the UCT (Law@work) and the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). She has also served as a visual research clerk for the Democratic Governance and Rights Unit at UCT. In addition, she worked as a student assistant at the Wilfred and Kramer law library at UCT and is currently working as a Student Housing and Residence Life coordinator at UCT.

Section Four Webinar Two Presenter

Ms Anelisa Dabula, PhD Candidate, UKZN



PROFILE

Anelisa Dabula holds a Bachelor of Social Science in Geography and Environmental Management and a Master's degree in Population Studies; both obtained UKZN. Her Master's research was based on social issues with strong ties to adolescents, which made her conduct her research on father-to-child relationships through the perspectives of young fathers, where she hoped to identify the dynamics young fathers faced in their journey of fatherhood. Her background is in developmental economics, migration, fertility, sexual and reproductive health and rights of gender and inequality, educational development and adolescent health. Human Geography has become the current focus for her PhD in Geography and Environmental Management. Apart from her position as a research assistant at Morris Webb Research Relations (an institution within UKZN), her work experience has exposed her to working closely with students through SSS. Within student support services, she worked as an academic mentor and advisor, tutor and team leader for the Academic Monitoring Support at UKZN.

Section Four Webinar Three Chairperson

Ms Thembisa Futshane, DDG: CET, DHET



PROFILE

Thembisa Futshane is the DDG of CET, at the DHET. She has fifteen years of government experience at senior management level at National and Provincial Departments. She has served as a Chief Director (CD) for TVET Colleges Institutional Support and Management, CD for Institutional Management, Development and Support, CD for Learner Development and Social Support Services and as a Director for Youth Development. Her education and training experience includes social change, policy development, implementation, support, monitoring and evaluation. She holds a Master's degree in Social Change and Development.

Section Four Webinar Three Keynote Speaker

Dr Rooksana Rajab, Senior Associate, JET Education Services



PROFILE

Dr Rooksana Rajab is an organisational development and change management expert with an emphasis on innovation to lead effectively, work collaboratively and drive results for change. She has a Doctorate in Management, Innovation and Technology and is currently a senior associate of JET Education Services – leading the PSET CLOUD programme – a five-year digital interoperability programme that seeks to ensure citizens make informed labour market decisions that lead to increased employment.

She started her career as an academic in higher education at the UKZN before moving into national policy development at the SAQA and eventually founding two highly successful development companies – one that specialised in the development of unemployed youth and the second, her current organisational development consultancy. She served as a board member on the National Skills Authority and the SAQA for several years and has worked on large scale projects with the Human Resource Development Council, SETAs and corporates. She has extensive knowledge and experience with the challenges of both post-school and related socio-economic issues.

Section Four Webinar Three Presenter

Mr Christoph Vorwerk, Skills Development Specialist, merSETA



PROFILE

Chris is a Skills Development Specialist with a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree and a University Education Diploma.

Chris has always had a special interest in developing people's abilities and skills, first as a teacher of German in the 1970s, as a school sports coach and then as an industrial training and course developer in the 1980s. He developed a national training plan for the plastics industry in the 1990s. This was based on an innovative open learning system, a precursor to what became unit standards. Fourteen thousand of a total of 30 000 employees in the industry participated in the scheme. As a result, he became involved in the research, development and implementation of the NQF and Skills Development legislation at the policy as well operational level. He has worked in a variety of contexts at organisational, industry, sectoral and government levels. He has also assisted higher and further education institutions, professional bodies, trade unions and industry associations to build their capacity in adapting to the NQF and skills development. I recently assisted an organisation in developing an activity- and project-based apprenticeship programme (no training manuals). He is currently assisting the DHET in the Centres of Specialisation project.

Section Four Webinar Three Presenter

Ms Barbara Jones, Curriculum Development Specialist, WC



PROFILE

Barbara Jones has a Master's degree in Education (Curriculum Development) from the UCT and a strong background and continuing interest in adult education. She has considerable and varied experience as a freelance higher education researcher, most notably on projects investigating RPL practices in higher education institutions and on flexible and blended learning and teaching in higher education. Access to and success in higher education has also been a focus of several research projects in which she has collaborated. In the last few years, she has been working as a Curriculum Development Specialist, first at the CPUT and presently at the UWC.

Section Four Webinar Three Presenter

Dr Heidi Bolton, Senior Manager, Research, SAQA



PROFILE

Dr Heidi Bolton is the Senior Manager: Research at SAQA. SAQA oversees the implementation and further development of the NQF – the system for education, training, development and learning-at-work in South Africa. Dr Bolton oversees research and development that supports, informs and provides the evidence base for SAQA's work. Her responsibilities include overseeing and collaborating in SAQA's long-term research partnerships and shorter studies, ensuring the integration of research findings into national policy development and implementation, and NQF as well as NQF research capacity development. Recent research foci include flexible learning-and-work pathways, flexible learning and teaching practices, articulation, RPL, AT, forms of knowledge, national education and training systems, and the related partnerships and networks established for this work within and between countries. Previously she was Senior Researcher at Umalusi, Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, worked as an academic textbook publisher and has taught adults and at school and university levels.

Section Four Webinar Three Presenter

Mr Japie Nel, Senior Manager: NQF Qualifications and Professional Bodies, SAQA



PROFILE

Mr Nel has worked with NQF-related issues since 1994. He was part of the National Training Board with the Minister of Labour in the development of a National Training Strategy for South Africa. Out of consultation with Unions and Employer Organisations, the NQF was proposed.

He joined SAQA in January 1998 as the coordinator of one of the National Standards Bodies. He started his own business in April 2000, where he consulted with SETAs, Higher Education Providers (public and private), skills development providers and other stakeholders in relation to qualifications development, quality assurance processes and other NQF processes.

He then worked for a while in the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the Middle East, where he was involved in the development of qualifications, policies and procedures, and accreditation of providers and qualifications. He re-joined SAQA in 2018 as Deputy Director in the Directorate Registration and Recognition, where he was involved in the registration of qualifications, recognition of professional bodies and development of policies and procedures.

He was recently appointed as the Senior Manager: NQF Qualifications and Professional Bodies in April 2021.

Section Four Webinar Three Presenter

Wellington Radu, Senior Manager: Authentication Services, SAQA



PROFILE

Wellington Radu is responsible for the verification of national and evaluation of foreign qualifications. Prior to this, he was the Director responsible for SAQA's advocacy and communication initiatives. He holds a Master's degree in Development Sociology from Wits, and he is interested in the nexus between South African and international trends in verification and evaluation practices.

Section Four Webinar Three Presenter

Mr Navin Vasudev, Manager: Business Development and Stakeholders, SAQA



PROFILE

Navin Vasudev's career background is in international development spanning over 20 years in programme development and management in the livelihoods, health, gender, education, forestry and social development sectors. His experience spans working in countries in southern and West Africa, South Asia and North America. With demonstrated strong skills working and consulting in an international, multicultural environment, he is skilled in project management, especially in participatory research, project coordination, and monitoring and evaluation. An accomplished cross-cultural facilitator, he is experienced in facilitation, networking, fundraising and applying shared-learning techniques. He is enthusiastic about building effective relationships with diverse stakeholders.

Section Four Webinar Four Chairperson

Dr Thandi Lewin, A/DDG, University Education, DHET



PROFILE

Thandi Lewin works in the DHET as the CD for Institutional Governance and Management Support in the University Education branch. Her responsibilities include student funding policy, oversight of NSFAS, university governance oversight, and student development and support matters, amongst other areas. Since February 2021, she has been A/DDG for University Education.

Previously she coordinated the development of a National Plan for PSET. Prior to that, she worked for JET Education Services, where she was responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation, and the Department of Education as a CD for Equity in Education and later for University Policy. She has also worked in the non-profit, university, and philanthropic sectors. Her work has been broadly in the field of higher education policy and education and social justice. She holds a Bachelor of Social Science degree from the UCT, a Master's in Education and International Development from University College London Institute of Education, and a PhD from the UFS.

Section Four Webinar Four Keynote Speaker

Prof Francois Strydom, Senior Director, UFS



PROFILE

Prof Francois Strydom has been the project leader of the South African Surveys of Student Engagement since 2007. The SASSE project, sponsored by the Kresge Foundation, currently works with 19 public higher education institutions across the country. In 2020, Prof Strydom led the Students' Access to and Use of Learning Materials survey, which was commissioned by the DHET. Prof Strydom has collaborated on various higher education initiatives related to access and success with higher education consortiums. He is the recipient of various research grants and has published several articles focused on higher education issues. His research interests include student engagement and success, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and evidence-based change in higher education.

Section Four Webinar Four Presenter

Dr Cheng-Wen Huang, Lecturer and Researcher, UCT



PROFILE

Dr Cheng-Wen Huang completed her PhD in Education at UCT. She has worked as a lecturer in English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) as well as a researcher on the Commonwealth Digital Education Leadership Training in Action project at CILT, UCT. Her research areas include multimodal social semiotics, academic literacies, argumentation, digital literacies, open education, social justice and assessment.

Section Four Webinar Four Presenter

Ms Gertrude van Wyk, Teacher and Researcher, and Doctoral student, Western Kentucky University



PROFILE

Gertrude van Wyk holds a Master's degree in Education with a focus on Gifted Education from the Central University of Technology in the Free State province of South Africa. She has over 22 years of teaching experience and has worked as an elementary school teacher and a part-time lecturer in Teacher Education for postgraduates and undergraduates at the Central University of Technology. She is currently a full-time Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership programme, with a focus on the education of diverse learners as well as Gifted Education at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA.

Section Four Webinar Four Presenter

Ms Sinethemba Zungu, Researcher, UKZN



PROFILE

Sinethemba Zungu holds a Master's degree in Housing from the UKZN. She has a background in Community and Development studies, which equips her with the ability to thrive in an environment of multi-stakeholder networks. Sinethemba has experience working with and for NGOs, private companies, research institutes, local and provincial governments initiating research studies to explore ways of creating opportunities for the previously disadvantaged individuals in KwaZulu-Natal. Her expertise lies in-network and relationship building. Sinethemba has interests in notions of innovative thinking for impactful service delivery in local government, inclusive policy development, social justice and social sciences research.

Section Four Webinar Five Keynote Speaker

Prof Linda Cooper, Emerita Associate Professor, UCT



PROFILE

Linda Cooper is Emerita Associate Professor at the UCT. Her research interests have focused on the relationship between different forms of knowledge, and she has published widely on Recognition of Prior Learning, widening access to adult learners in higher education and workers' education. Her book publications include *Workers' Education in the Global South: Radical Adult Education at the Crossroads* (Brill/Sense Publishers, 2020); (co-edited) *Renewing Workers' Education: Towards a Radical Alternative Vision* (HSRC Press, 2019); and (co-authored) *RPL as Specialised Pedagogy: Crossing the Lines* (HSRC Press, 2016).

Section Four Webinar Five Presenter

Dr Pinky Mahlangu, Specialist Scientist, SAMRCI



PROFILE

Dr Pinky Mahlangu is a Specialist Scientist at the Gender and Health Research Unit, SAMRC and an Honorary Lecturer at the School of Public Health, Wits. A key focus of her research has been on understanding the drivers and risk factors for women and children's experiences of GBV in South Africa and on the development and testing of evidence-based interventions to prevent violence against women and children in low and middle-income countries.

Section Five Presenter

Dr Tabisa Mayisela, Lecturer and Principal Investigator for the COOL Project, UCT



PROFILE

Dr Tabisa Mayisela is a senior lecturer and co-ordinator of the Staff Development cluster at the CILT at UCT. She is an experienced staff developer and instructional designer who has worked with academics on the integration of educational technologies and digital literacies into course curricula. She facilitates professional development workshops and seminars for academic staff. Tabisa also convenes and co-teaches in both Postgraduate Diploma in Education streams: Higher Education Studies and Educational Technologies. Her research interests are students' development of digital literacies, integration of educational technologies and digital literacies into course curricula, academic staff (professional) development and online learning design. In addition to her digital literacies focus on her PhD, she has been involved in the development of the Commonwealth of Learning concept document – Curriculum for Digital Education Leadership. Tabisa is currently the principal investigator of the COOL project that is funded by the DHET. This project aims to develop 16 case studies on open learning practices in the South African PSET sector.

Section Five Presenter Webinar One summary

Prof Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams, Emeritus Associate Professor, CT



PROFILE

Emeritus Associate Professor Cheryl Ann Hodgkinson-Williams taught Online Learning Design, Advanced Research Design and Researching Higher Education courses to postgraduate students and supervised Master's and PhD students in Educational Technology, Open Education and Higher Education Studies.

She holds a PhD in computer-assisted learning and has taught and supervised in the field of ICTs in education since 1994, first at the University of Pretoria, then at Rhodes University and then at UCT. In addition, she was the Principal Investigator of the IDRC-funded Research in Open Educational Resources for Development (ROER4D) project, which investigated the adoption and impact of the use of open educational resources in 21 countries in the Global South. She is an advisor on the Digital Open Textbooks for Development (DOT4D) project, the former Principal Investigator of, and now an advisor on, the COOL project that is investigating the readiness towards open learning of TVET and Higher Education institutions in South Africa. She was a UNESCO Chair of Open Education and Social Justice. In November 2019, Cheryl was awarded the Open Education Consortium Leadership Award and was interviewed for the Leaders and Legends of Online Learning podcast. Cheryl took early retirement at the end of January 2020 but is still active as a consulting researcher and an Open Education and Social Justice advocate.

Section Five Presenter

Prof Ramneek Ahluwalia, CEO, Higher Health



PROFILE

Dr (Professor) Ahluwalia is a seasoned, trained, qualified physician and a Health Systems, Policy and Management Specialist. He possesses qualifications of Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery, a Master of Business Administration degree (Gold medal) from UCT, and a PhD in Public Health that has assisted him in building a large number of significant diverse health programmes in both developing and developed countries with absolute scientific and epidemiological knowledge and experience.

In his current job as a CEO of Higher Health, the organisation looks into the health, wellness and development needs of all public universities, technical colleges, vocational colleges, community colleges, private higher education institutions, as well as all the work and skills-based learning institutions across South Africa.

He is also a Professor of Practice with the Faculty of Health Sciences, UJ and has written many publications, articles, opinion pieces on Public health, HIV, Mental Health and universal access to health care. Prof Ahluwalia also serves on several boards of various governmental and NGOs, and in his capacity, served as a health expert on the South African Delegation for BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Academic forum. He has been a speaker at conferences, forums and symposiums across the world and actively interacts-with local and international media.

Section Six Chairperson

Mr Samuel Zamokuhle Zungu, DDG, TVET, DHET



PROFILE

Empangeni-born, PhD candidate Sam Zungu is a multi-skilled veteran of the education sector. The recently appointed DDG: TVET has more than two decades' experience as a skills development and training practitioner. And his is not just a local success story.

The former uMfolozi TVET College Principal was instrumental in firming TVET College partnerships with industry, including Sweden's Kalmar Maritime Academy for the establishment of the uMfolozi TVET Maritime Academy, as well as cooperation between Germany's Kreishandwerkerschaft for the establishment of the uMfolozi TVET Civil and Construction Centre of Excellence.

Zungu has also served on various boards, including as Chairperson of the Transport Education and Training Authority, Advisory Board Member of the South African International Maritime Institute, and Ministerial Task Team Member for the establishment of the South African Institute for Vocational and CET. Zungu says he's more than ready for the challenge the new role brings.

He counts honesty, integrity and emotional intelligence among his 'likes'. Zungu's optimism is infectious.

By 2030, Zungu's vision is a more inclusive TVET system that caters adequately for people with disabilities and with an emphasis on gender sensitivity. He wants to increase the number of artisans produced by the TVET sector in line with the projected economic growth as a country. Zungu envisions a highly digitised teaching and learning environment that allows innovative and entrepreneurial thinking for both students and staff. He explained, "Producing students that are able to face the 21st-century challenges head-on without any fear of failure."

Section Six Presenter

Dr Linda Meyer, Director, Operations, USAf



PROFILE

Dr Linda Meyer is the Head of Operations at Universities South Africa (USAf). Linda holds a Doctor of Philosophy (RSA), Doctor of Business Administration (USA), Masters of Business Administration (UK), Post Graduate Diploma in Management Studies (UK), Bachelor of Business Administration, B.Com (Law) and several other Diplomas and Higher Certificates and professional certifications.

Section Six Presenter

Mr Reineth Mgiba, A/CD, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, DHET



Mr Mgiba is the A/CD for Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. He leads a team of specialists in system monitoring and economic analysis, research and evaluation, policy development coordination as well as information systems management.

He holds a Master's degree in Management from Wits, an Honours Degree in Economics and a Degree in Public Administration from the UKZN. He also completed several skills enhancing short programmes with various institutions of learning.

He started his career as a practitioner at the Department of Labour 20 years ago, where he was responsible for labour market information and planning, moving through the ranks of management to become the Chief Planner, Deputy Director at the former National Department of Human Settlements.

He has more than 15 years' experience in the fields of strategic planning, policy development and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and corporate governance.