2nd Annual eLearning Symposium

Hotel School Conference Centre

26 May 2016

Using eLearning to Enhance Student Success

“eLearning doesn’t just ‘happen’! It requires careful planning and implementation”.

-Anonymous
## Programme

**Programme Chair:** Dr Rosaline Govender

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“Where my reason, imagination or interest were not engaged, I would not or I could not learn.”

- *Winston Churchill*
Simon Bhekimiuzi Khoza (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer: Discipline of Curriculum Studies & Educational Technology, Academic Leader: Research & Higher Degrees (School of Education) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. He coordinates different undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and teaches and supervises postgraduate research in Curriculum Studies & Educational Technology. He has published in local and international journals. He has supervised more than forty (40) postgraduate students for completion (graduated students). His publications are on Curriculum and Educational Technology issues with a keen interest in the convergence of educational theory and technological platforms (the reasons for using technology in education). He started his career as a Civil Engineer (1990 – 1992) and moved to the Department of Education where he worked as a Lecturer (Mathematics, Drawing, Science and Computer Science) stationed at Umlazi Technical College (1993 – 2002) where he won four awards for his outstanding performance. Towards the end of 2002 he joined the University of KwaZulu-Natal (the then University of Durban-Westville) where he is currently working. He worked as a part-time Tutor at the then University of Natal where he taught computer science (2000 – 2002) after he completed a ND in Information Technology (TSA). He works as the Department of Education National moderator for the Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. In 2008, 2009 and 2011 he was the Chairperson of the Federation of Dance-Sport South Africa (FEDANSA).
Keynote Address: Dr Bheki Khoza (UKZN)

Can Educational Technology be defined from South African university facilitators’ understanding...?

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This paper presents an interpretive case study of university facilitators who reflected on their understanding of Educational Technology at a South African university. Educational Technology is about teaching/learning resources which are divided into Technology in Education (hard-ware and soft-ware) and Technology of Education (ideological-ware resources) that are used in education to organise Teaching/Learning Signals. The aim of the study was to explore the facilitators’ understanding of Educational Technology and also give voice to their perceptions. The study used an email to involve all the sixty facilitators from the school of education in answering research question one. One-on-one semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion for data generation were conducted with six facilitators that were purposively selected for the in-depth data needed to answer research question two of this study. Purposive sampling together with convenience sampling was used in selecting the six facilitators from the School of Education, one facilitator from each of the school’s six departments. Guided analysis was used and generated four themes for data analysis framed by Teaching/Learning Signals, Technology of Education and Technology in Education. The main findings of this study indicate that the facilitators did not understand Educational Technology. This paper consequently recommends the promotion of the proposed definition of Educational Technology in order to sustain Educational Technology as the discipline that generates theories that underpin the integration of different resources in education or curriculum.
Sizwe Dlalisa and Dr Jane Skinner

A Closer Look at the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

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This paper is work in progress. It draws on research conducted at DUT (Dlalisa, 2015) into ‘Factors affecting the post-implementation adoption and usage of Blackboard amongst academics at DUT’. The theoretical framework used in the study was the popular Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The findings of the study were however in contradiction of TAM’s assumptions. Not only was correlation not significant between Actual usage and Intention to use but the regression analysis test showed that Intention To Use did not predict Actual Usage at all. This appears to call for a revision of TAM and the consideration of other factor(s), However, the findings of this study did concur with all TAM’s determinants relationships except behavioural intention and actual usage.

The research was therefore developed further by the researcher along with Dr Jane Skinner (DUT) and Dr Caroline Goodier (UKZN). An extensive literature search revealed a reluctance on the part of academic staff to employ LMS systems more generally both nationally and internationally – and specifically a failure to make maximum use of the most innovative teaching and learning features which LMS systems can offer. Theoretical models appeared to be unable to illuminate these trends. The researchers therefore investigated the terms used in the models, and ambiguities and uncertainties in the use and understanding of key terms (including ‘usefulness’ ‘learning systems’ and ‘management systems’) were identified. It was concluded that this could potentially undermine the validity and reliability of findings of research questions employing these terms, and thus potentially also undermine the usefulness of models which draw on these terms. The paper concludes that it is possible to clarify the terminology and thus to help re-establish the value of the model.
Anusha Govender

Engaging our students: Technology and Active Learning

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The rapid advances in technology is transforming education in the 21st century. Educational institutions are designing and implementing cutting-edge curricula where the emphasis on teaching and learning is shifting from the delivery of content to the development of skills. First year students who are products of a problematic schooling system experience difficulties in coping with higher education and often drop out after the first semester. To ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place, there is a need to revise the teaching, learning and assessment practices so that they are relevant to the current learner. Students learn best when learning is active. They must be mentally involved when engaging in hands-on activities that require a process of inquiry, discovery, investigation and interpretation. Students must be able to talk about what they have learned, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. This paper reports on the implementation of active learning in a first year Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) module. The learning activities were designed to integrate the use of technology, general education and the knowledge of discipline-specific content to provide the learner with a meaningful learning experience.
Esther D Joubert

The use of rubrics to evaluate the effectiveness of technology-mediated courses

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In its most general sense, e-learning can be defined as the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance a student’s learning. The term is sometimes used synonymously with the term blended learning which is becoming a more prevalent teaching and learning approach. “Blended learning may be defined as the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face experiences with technology-enhanced learning experiences”. (Kilfoil, 2015:11). When one decides to use technology, an important consideration must be the adoption of novel ways to design, present and assess courses; the corresponding pedagogical strategies which are chosen must be in alignment with this so that it becomes appropriate for the higher education purpose which it serves (Gordon, 2014). Technology is progressing at an astonishing rate and the concurrent use of targeted technology-enhanced learning approaches is not always keeping pace. In other words, technological advances are occurring faster than the development of pedagogical strategies to effectively implement e-learning.

One should use technology only if it helps us achieve our educational goals in a better way. It is a myth that student success will improve simply through the adoption of technology in our courses. The evaluation of technology-mediated learning courses is necessary to ascertain if they are indeed relevant to and effective in achieving the purpose of student success (Khan, 2004). However, establishing a cause-and-effect relationship is not always simple. Impact studies will also elicit ethical considerations that are not easy to mitigate. How then do we justify using technology if we cannot evaluate its effectiveness? Fortunately there are several methods which one can investigate to do this, including rubrics. A rubric provides a scoring guide so that one can allocate a mark or grade against certain levels of performance. Particular criteria are provided and the more detailed the description of the criteria is, the less subjective the evaluation will be. Rubrics can be a simple and efficient tool for academics to use. This presentation will look at how one can use rubrics to evaluate the effectiveness of a technology-mediated course.
Dr Mogie Rajkoomar

Lecturer to Facilitator: Finding the right blend

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Lecturers teach different content to a diverse group of students in unique instructional settings. Behavior-changing learning experiences are led by experienced, passionate professionals who know the content and how students learn. Lecturers in addition to being experienced authorities on their subject areas should have a passion for teaching and have developed this passion into learning facilitation skills. Facilitators use their knowledge of how students learn to create an active environment that embraces students’ prior knowledge and unique learning style. They engage the participant in taking charge of their learning. A variety of teaching tools and techniques need to be employed to ensure learning outcomes. A strong facilitator with a deep knowledge of the content, an understanding of how students learn, and a rich repertoire of activities to facilitate learning can deliver an effective class. The outcomes of this interactive workshop attempts to encourage reflection on current teaching practices; align method of teaching (and assessment) to outcomes of syllabus; align modes of instruction (face-to-face and eLearning) to the outcomes of syllabus; identify appropriate eLearning tools to enhance the learning environment and explore the capabilities of these tools.