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OLC Accelerate 2020
NWU Vaal – School of Management Sciences
Research Entity - TELIT-SA
Before We Start
Global disasters change the world, and the COVID-19 outbreak is having a significant effect on all aspects of human life and is very much akin to a major war.

The reality that we have to embrace is that the legacy of the Covid-19 crisis will live with us for years, perhaps decades to come.

This will undoubtedly change how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) function within society, and how they interact with management, staff and students.

In 2020, Online teaching, and the preparation thereof, became a reality for all institutions in South Africa. Suddenly, management of the HEI had to develop and start intervention strategies to ensure that the academic programme for 2020 could continue under these uncertain times.
In March 2020, the president announced a national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All HEIs had to close their gates and a very uncertain period started for these Institutions, especially public universities which have been practicing face to face teaching modalities for many years with very little experience teaching in an online environment.

It was therefore detrimental to embrace the new normal—teaching and learning online, meeting and collaboration via Zoom, Skype, Google classroom, WhatsApp, and a virtual office.

The HEIs in South Africa were not ready for this educational crisis—from face to face contact with students to teaching and learning online, and even more so remotely in a developing country where individuals might not have access to the same resources.
• Business as usual (going to class, face to face interaction between lecturers and students in a classroom environment, facilities, and access to WiFi on campus and at residences) were no more the order of the day.

• To ensure readiness to commence with teaching and learning online in a short period of time, faculties had to collect the necessary data in terms of internet and device access, due to the fact that the HEI had to sustain its academic presence, deliver competitive market related programmes, and equip students with the critical 21st Century skills

  - critical thinking, people management, emotional intelligence, judgement, negotiation, cognitive flexibility, as well as knowledge production and management.
How do we deliver...

Graduates

Responsible Members Society

Living Longer Sustainably
Covid-19 & Higher Education

• The COVID-19 pandemic highlights that as an institution and faculty it is imperative to be more responsive to a changing education.

• In order to ensure better preparedness for future uncertainties or crises, it was crucial to determine the Faculty’s (managers, academic support staff, lecturers, and students) access, perceived readiness and attitudes towards ERL, their experiences engaging with ERL, and what strategies can be implemented post-crisis.
NWU Context
## Understanding the NWU Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Campuses</th>
<th>Potchefstroom (North-West Province)</th>
<th>Vaal (Gauteng Province)</th>
<th>Mahikeng (North-West Province)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 Faculties</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Economic &amp; Management</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>Sciences</td>
<td>Law</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>Natural and Agricultural Sciences</td>
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<td>Theology</td>
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<tr>
<th>Pass Rate (Contact Students, 2017)</th>
<th>86.6%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Degrees Enrolment (2019)</td>
<td>36,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications by major field of study in 2018 (Business Management)</td>
<td>3,330 / 21.7%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences
Please indicate which of the following items you have access to: 1,000 responses

- A suitable device for online learning: 844 (84.4%)
- A suitable network connection: 596 (59.6%)
- Ample data: 305 (30.5%)
- Electricity: 778 (77.8%)
- A place at my home that can serve as a ...: 529 (52.9%)
What are your biggest concerns with the transition to remote learning so far? (Check all that apply.)

1. Marks/performing well
2. Completing internship/work-integrated learning
3. Not being able to see my class mates
4. Changes to assessment structures
5. Not being able to communicate with lecturers
6. Possible delay in completing degree
7. Missing out on on-campus activities
Which of the following teaching-related accessibility issues have been challenging for you since the transition to remote learning? (Check all that apply.)

1. Lecturers only holding synchronous classes
2. Timed Tests
3. Lecturers not using the LMS
4. Lecturers not using a tool that is supported by the Institution
Student Preparedness Competencies
Knowledge Management Competencies

Well-Developed

1. Read and write at an appropriate level.
2. Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information.
3. Identify and rectify gaps in my own understanding.
4. Access information from a variety of sources.

Needs Attention

1. Cannot go outside the technology and learning community to seek information.
2. Struggle to present information in a variety of formats.
3. Struggle to navigate large bodies of content.
4. Cannot critique a website in relation to content.
Collaboration & Communication Competencies

Well-Developed

1. Respond to others with respect.
2. Member of the learning community.
3. Acknowledge the facilitation role of the lecturer in the learning environment.

Needs Attention

1. Cannot encourage others to post.
2. Struggle to contribute new ideas to a discussion.
3. Struggle to comment upon or critique a response made by the lecturer.
Technological Competencies

**Well-Developed**
1. Use technology to support own learning style.
2. Use technology to assist in the construction of knowledge.
3. Use a web browser with skill and purpose.

**Needs Attention**
1. Employ a logical process to identify and solve a computer problem.
2. Integrate a variety of software applications to produce an outcome.
3. Make allowances for the virtual nature of the learning environment.
Student Learning Abilities
**Time-Management Learning Abilities**

1. Finish things that I start.
2. Sacrifice personal time to complete assignments and readings.
3. Get things done without having to be directed.

**Needs Attention**

1. Considering my personal and professional schedule, I struggle to spend significant time and energy to engage in online learning classes.
2. Struggle to get things done on time.
3. Able to organise time well to ensure work and tasks do not escalate.
Self-Motivation Learning Abilities

1. Enjoy learning that is both interesting and challenging, and motivated in such situations to go beyond the minimum requirements.
2. Consider flexibility in time as an important motivating factor in partaking in online learning.

Well-Developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
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Needs Attention

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<th>Item 1</th>
<th>Item 2</th>
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<td>79.2%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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1. Struggle to stay motivated through online learning if my lecturer is not online at all times.
2. Struggle to be motivated and enthusiastic to complete modules through online learning.
Self-Directed Learning Abilities

1. Take responsibility for own learning.
2. Do not need someone to encourage me to start an assignment or project.

Well-Developed
- Item 1: 97.5%
- Item 2: 86.8%

Needs Attention
- Item 1: 97.5%
- Item 2: 84%

1. Difficult to take responsibility for staying in contact with my lecturer during online learning.
2. Struggle to communicate effectively with others using online technologies.
Self-Management Learning Abilities

1. Determined to stick to studies despite challenging situations.
2. Look forward to learning new skills and master them quickly.

Well-Developed

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<tr>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
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Needs Attention

<table>
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<th>Item 1</th>
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<td>59%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
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Institutional Readiness e-Learning
Administrative Support

1. The NWU is willing to accept e-learning as a mode for teaching and learning.
2. There is commitment on the part of NWU Leaders to use technology to achieve strategic academic goals.
3. The NWU is willing to make provisions for collaborative teaching arrangements.
4. The Institution recognises that large-scale course redesign for e-learning initiative involves a strong collaboration among the lecturers, IT personnel, and administrators in the planning, as well as the implementation thereof.
1. e-Fundi has the necessary system capacity to support learning activities.
2. e-Fundi provides appropriate tools for communication and collaboration.
3. The NWU has a well-developed technical infrastructure.
4. The NWU ensures that instructional resources and equipment are readily available, accessible and reliable.
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Concluding Remarks
Conclusion

- Although students know where to find information and rectify gaps in their own understanding, the struggle to navigate large bodies of content and to present information in a variety of formats.

- Students acknowledge that the lecturer is only a facilitator in the learning process, but they still find it challenging to contribute ideas of their own to an online discussion, or to comment on responses by the lecturer. Encourage and motivate students to engage in conversation not just with their peers, but also with the lecturer through activities, assignments or online discussions (meetings).

- Students are familiar with the use of technology, but struggle to integrate a variety of software applications when they have to complete a task/assignment. Use technology they are familiar with and if you want to introduce new technologies to the learning experience, ensure adequate training and background of the importance of these new technologies for students.

- Although students are able to complete tasks without having to be directed, they struggle to engage in online learning between their work, family and social life. Provide guidance in terms of time-management techniques that will enable them to prevent procrastination and provide them with a detailed work plan/semester schedule with set deadlines.
Conclusion

• Flexibility in time is a strong motivator for students concerning online learning. Provide the opportunity to complete tasks within a time-frame that is acceptable and achievable for both students and lecturers.

• Students still need (and want) face-to-face lectures (online) to understand content. Make time to frequently meet with students online to address their questions, provide clarity on challenging content.

• In general, students within F-EMS have a positive attitude towards the concept of e-assessment, however, they are concerned about technical problems that can make e-assessment impractical. Embrace opportunities to make use of e-assessment, but allow for technical problems (such as internet connectivity, bandwidth issues, and loadshedding) when planning e-assessment practices.
Join us in changing the future of education and training through technology enhanced learning with TELIT-SA

Thank you

Dr Clarise Mostert
TELIT-SA
NWU

Scan the QR Code to find out a bit more about Dr Clarise Mostert