LESSONS FROM A PANDEMIC: CONTINUED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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Professional/Staff Development

- Reskilling/upskilling?
- What type of staff development is needed? – teaching, research, community service
- When and how should we train staff? – used to be in face-to-face workshop format mainly, now online
- Life-long learning, personalised learning, peer learning, autonomous learning?
- Building resilience

Overview of my talk

- Introduction and context
- Professional/staff development
- Life-long learning
- Collaborative and peer learning
- Resilience
- Pre-pandemic
- During the pandemic
- Post-pandemic
- Open Education, OER, flexibility, self-directedness ...
- Conclusion

Life-long Learning: developing a learning culture

While some learning and development activities will occur on an ad hoc basis, it can be helpful to plan ahead and develop an annual plan, for the following reasons:

- It sets out how you are going to achieve your policy
- It helps you to take a strategic approach to learning and development
- You can budget for planned activities – it is more difficult to budget for unplanned ones
- If you collate learning and development needs across the organisation, you can see which staff members have the same need, and plan a learning activity for all of them.

Introduction: a silver lining

- Overview of different staff development programmes undertaken at the University of Eswatini (Southern Africa) since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Transiting from face-to-face and blended teaching and learning to the fully online mode was a major challenge for ill-prepared staff.
- Staff development in the Covid-19 pandemic was difficult, especially at the start of the pandemic when everyone was trying to adapt teaching and learning practices as best as possible (Sassere and Makhasane, 2020; Du Preez and Le Grange, 2020).
- Lack of infrastructure and finances, digital divides, resource and skill limitations which hinder staff development (Dube, 2020; Koi-Akrofi, 2020) needed to be balanced against the need for immediate action in the form of staff development to ensure continued teaching and learning.
- Steps undertaken to continue developing teaching staff's knowledge, skills and attitudes while facing adversity.

Pre-pandemic Staff Development

- How did we do it?
- Face-to-face meetings and workshops (one day or, if the budget permitted, longer sessions)
- Very much instructor-centred, little flexibility

During the pandemic: staff support rather than staff development?

- For quite some time there was little communication between management and staff, which was disconcerting.
- Behind the scenes there was movement: CELT (Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching) and IDE (after request from VC) prepared a training programme and asked selected staff members to collaborate.
- As part of the team, we were assigned specific tasks to train teaching staff (in view of the transition to online learning) within the framework of 2 online courses and a series of webinars.
- Two online courses, series of webinars (ongoing, currently on authentic online assessment), personalised support from IT and ID staff.

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI

COURSE TITLE: Introduction to Designing and Developing an Online Course Using Moodle

Topic 0: Introduction
- Getting to know one another
- Filling in a Survey
- Reflect on your practice
- The connection between Moodle and instructional design

Topic 4: Developing Your online course plan
- Sample of Blended Learning Course specifications Templates
- Traditional and online activities
- Editable Template
- Practical work
- Moodle Quiz
- Reflect on your practice

Topic 3: Students Learning Experience
- Th 21st Century 4Cs
- Identifying Students Needs
- Building a Community of Practice
- Creating a Moodle Quiz
- Reflect on your practice

Topic 2: Planning your online course
- The role of Instructional Design Models in an online course
- Instructional System Design (ISD)
- Recommended instructional materials design models role of Key resources
- Assessment in an online course
- Moodle Quiz
- Reflect on your practice

Topic 1: Planning your online course
- The role of a course outline in learning and teaching
- The role of learning outcomes in any online course
- Key resources
- Moodle Quiz
- Reflect on your practice

Discussion of findings: components of the courses and underlying design principles

- TBL002; TBL003: focus on hands-on practice of Moodle features (see slides after TBL002).
- Webinars: Q and A sessions, examples of « how to », discussion on particular topics (after participants had had practical implementation experience).
- The course focused first on pedagogy and then went on to combine pedagogical aspects with ICT.
- Scaffolding approach. Socio-constructivist in nature, opportunities for reflection, collaboration and team work.
- Not prescriptive; at introduction level; give basic information and opportunities to practise but also include « food for thought ».

Course Overview

Course Objectives

By the end of this online course, you will be able to:
- communicate and describe the pedagogical and design strategies for creating an online course
- capably participant in the development of collaborative online tasks
- recognize key considerations when designing and developing an online course
- develop a plan for a online learning and teaching course.

Course Duration

This is a 2 weeks course (starting Monday 25th May up to Friday 5th June).

Post-pandemic Staff Development/Capacity building

- **What do we need training on?** Digital pedagogies, inclusive education, equity, pedagogies of care, artificial intelligence, virtual realities, open education, diversity, the Internet of Things, "teachers as intercultural learners", "broadening the teaching team", "assessment and evaluation", "using difference as a resource" (Leask, 2006), ...
- **Which skills will we need in the (near) future?** Flexibility, adaptability, emotional intelligence, collaboration, leadership, self-management and self-monitoring (self-directedness).
- **How should we be developing our staff competencies?** Life-long learning, peer learning, self-directedness, partnerships, networking, ...
- **What should our training resources look like?** Open Education Resources, Open (source) Technologies, ...
- LEARNING AS AN EVENT → LEARNING IN THE FLOW OF WORK
- TECHNICAL SKILLS FIRST → CAPABILITIES FIRST
- DIGITAL LEARNING AS A SUPPLEMENT → INTEGRATED DIGITAL, VIRTUAL, AND IN-PERSON LEARNING
- STRUCTURED DEVELOPMENT → SELF-DIRECTED AND PERSONALISED DEVELOPMENT

Course Outline

- Topic 0: Introduction
- Topic 1: Planning your online course
- Topic 2: Designing your Online Plan & Course
- Topic 3: Students learning experience.
- Topic 4: Developing your Online Course Learning and Teaching plan

Introduction to Designing and Developing A UNESWA Online Course Using Moodle

UNESWA Online Learning Course

Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators – IDE, University of Eswatini

Course objectives

At the end of the course, participants will be able to:
- Design an online lesson and/or course
- Create digital learning materials
- Teach and facilitate online
- Assess online

- ONLINE TEACHING/LEARNING APPROACHES: Readings, lecture notes, screencasts, videos, audios, discussion, individual activities, group activities

- ASSESSMENT: Assignments in each module. Assessment includes participation in the various online activities proposed.

- QUALIFICATION: Certificate in Online Teaching for Educators

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Key competencies

- carry out needs' analysis in online course development
- apply principles of online programme designing in developing online courses
- design online courses
- utilise different functions of a Learner Management System (Moodle)
- identify and use different software and authoring tools
- create useful, engaging and interactive digital learning materials
- appreciate the roles, skills and competencies of an online learning facilitator
- manage online discussion as a teaching/learning tool
- plan and facilitate a live online lesson
- create authentic and engaging assessments online
- provide meaningful and instructive feedback in online learning
- develop strategies for different forms and ways of authentic online assessment
- address ethical issues in online assessment.

Conclusion

- Questions remain: where are we? Where do we want to go?
- There are many possible solutions but they require cooperation, collaboration, flexibility on our part (and on that of all stakeholders), networking.
- Among these solutions, there are: OER, open education, open technologies, …

MODE OF DELIVERY: Online using the Moodle platform
(facilitated by a 5-person team per module: 2 facilitators, 1 e-tutor, 1 technologist, 1 technician), complemented by interactions on WhatsApp

COURSE STRUCTURE: 4 modules, namely IDE101, IDE102, IDE103 and IDE104, taken consecutively.

DURATION: 6 weeks (2h per day), 7 working days per module (there is always a weekend for each module too)

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