THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION AND OPEN LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICA (NADEOSA) 2019 CONFERENCE
Government Priorities

- Economic transformation and job creation
- Education, skills and health
- Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality basic services
- Spatial integration, human settlements and local government;
- Social cohesion and safe communities
- A capable, ethical and developmental state
- A better Africa and World
THEME: DEVELOPING CAPACITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE OPEN EDUCATION PRACTICES

Sub-themes: Access with success in open education practices
- Supporting students
- Enhancing quality assurance
- Collaborative practices
- Capacity Development

The Conference was held at Monash University on the 3rd – 5th July 2019, attended by 50 people.
An increased emphasis on open educational resources has led to a resource-centred approach in some educational contexts. Hence, it has become essential to consider the affordances of the diffraction between open education practices, multimodal self-directed learning and demiurgic access.
THE KEYNOTE SPEAKERS WHO EACH HAD PRESENTATIONS THAT BUILT ON THE CONFERENCE’S MAIN THEME WERE AS FOLLOWS:

Trudy van Wyk from DHET on Recognizing learning in open learning), Prof Alan Amory from SAIDE (Student success today and tomorrow). The main points of Trudy’s presentation were based on the following points:

Students’ need to prepared to function in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Digital technology being the new opportunity

Learning should be covered from prior, current and future learning

Higher Education needs to acknowledge learning through experience rather than just academic learning

Trudy left a valuable discussion on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), where she stated that it needs to be looked into properly based on the above-mentioned points.
Prof Allan Amory - Programme Specialist: Learning Technologies from SAIDE on Student Success today and tomorrow through the Siyaphumelela project. Focus should be placed on student success as the key to open learning. Allan spoke of the project as an initiative to improve student success through data analytics, with five South African partner institutions (University of Pretoria, University of the Free State, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, University of Kwazulu Natal and Durban University of Technology) through creating South African Models of successful data analytics. The goal of this project is to improve student success through student engagement. He also spoke of the SSIPP core design principles, which are Sustained, Strategic, Integrated, Proactive and Personalized. He urged institutions of HE to think of a way to change institutions and how they think.
Barbra Howard from Appalachian State University on Building capacity through developing the practices of instructors. Barbra briefly touched on the facts about continued distance education, which is convenient, affordable, the use of technology as well as accessibility. She spoke of the changes in online pedagogy. Connections with students and connecting students themselves is crucial. Course organisation that makes sense. Instructional strategies that go beyond lecture and assessments that lead to critical thinking and beyond.

Prof J.A.K Olivier from NW University on Pathways in multimodal self-directed Learning towards demiurgic access to open learning). Emphasis was on Open Educational Resources and self-directed learning using one text to interpret another, which are different but intersect. The focus of the study was on entanglements and differences rather than similarities. He left a question: “Are OER and Open Education becoming educational myths or grand fashionable approaches?” He recommended that an awareness on semiotic and instructional design be inclusive. He then invited HE to becoming a part of SADC network for OER and multimodal learning.
The Growth of Distance Education

- Over 6 million students in US Higher Education
  least one distance education or online course.

- Globally, blended or distance education may become
  the "new norm" in providing higher education.
  (Poddychiess, Wagner-Walén, & Johannes, 2018)

What is the potential of building Distance Education to increase the capacity of Higher Education?
The following were a few amongst the conference papers presented:

Immelman M from the University of the Free State: ODL meets project Management

Speaker spoke of an individual project with project management being overlooked. The ADDIE model of instruction was used with the focus of the project being on Online Modality. The process of managing this project underwent steps to ensure the quality of online modules. This study or project looked at the instructional design workflow. The take homes from this presentation were: Project manager needs to be a dedicated project manager in facilitating good quality, the manual loading of students once the online module has been developed and built needs to thoroughly be checked before the module goes online, contingency planning for covering emergencies in relation to modules needs to be put in place. Quality assurance of the online module is a necessity.
Snyman M from University of South Africa: An exploration of students’ and academics’ experiences of the RPL process for admission to postgraduate studies

The presentation was focused on what RPL is according to UNISA and how it works. RPL is a bridge with the focus being on Student Centeredness. The process follows a rigorous assessment process which entails: engagement, listening skills, CAEL standards for quality assurance, academics become assessors of RPL applications through understanding lived experiences and backgrounds. The research then is international and supports adult learners. Motivation of adults to continue learning through any kind of circumstances is the core of the project/presentation. The lived experiences of students and academics is documented. Recognition of Prior Learning is a bridge of OASIS.
Hibling A from Edge learning media: feedback from lecturers on different quality assurance mechanisms-an E-Learning ecosystem in medical problem based learning

Speaker focused on student collaboration within defined groups. Sharing and trust building amongst students and providing learning resources such as videos and reading packs to further improve and support distance learning and education

Amory A, Bialobzeska M & welch T from Saide: Using technology to mediate teacher professional development in rural African contexts Framework: Teacher- Student- Technology Instruction vs Meditative

The speaker used course design for the project on different levels:
• School based process:
  • Multiple modes of provision
  • Activity based approach
  • Collaborative learning
  • New methods modelled
  • Weekly learning strategies
  • Reflection was promoted
  • Weekly self-assessment
Also application design and evaluation was spoken of, where social culture supports technology interaction, design patterns support easy learning, activity object is a tool mediation, which is important to the design of technology.
A quality criteria pre-conference workshop was held the morning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} July 2019, where conference attendees came together to discuss the existing quality assurance criteria. It is important for this workshop to continue as its existence assists members of HE and ODEL to align with the correct quality criteria.
THE AGM:

A new Executive was elected with Dr Ruth Aluko as the new President. Other members of the executive are as follows:

Dr Mhlanga, Professor Makoe, Professor Coetzee, Mr Poolman, Miss Phejane, Mr Mudavanhu, Mrs. Bellingan, Professor Jacobs, Mrs. Glenny, Miss Smith, Professor Louw, Mr Kull
Communal constructivism

Holmes et al. (2001:17) - communal constructivism is an approach to learning in which students not only construct their own knowledge (constructivism) as a result of social interaction with their environment but are also actively engaged for their learning. The process of constructing knowledge and the learning community, student-centeredness and the active engagement of learners can be fostered where self-directed learning can be the teacher is the one who teaches but one who is himself taught, in dialogue with the students, who in turn, while being taught also teach.
OVERALL REMARKS:

The conference was an overall success, although the attendance of delegates was low. Overall, the conference was a success...