



## **1<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference on Innovation in Learning & Teaching in Higher Education:**

*Re-thinking Higher Education under the COVID-19  
pandemic and beyond*

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## **CILT Conference Abstracts:**

## **Recognising student choices and voices: Self-directed multimodal assessment as equitable learning**

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### **Abstract**

Worldwide the need for lifelong learning and appropriate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are noted. However, as massification of higher education means that more students are accommodated at universities, issues around quality education and especially student success seem problematic. Moreover, dropout rates are alarming in a world where many students are struggling financially. Consequently, teaching in higher education needs to consider ways in which to support students effectively.

In this paper, assessment is approached as a social justice activity that is central to learning in higher education. The need for assessment as learning versus assessment of learning is interpreted in terms of self-directed learning. In this regard, self-directed learning and ultimately self-directed learning-oriented assessment implies a student-centred approach where students take charge of and are involved in the learning process. Underpinning self-directed learning-oriented assessment is an emphasis on metacognition, motivation and feedback.

Furthermore, this paper also explores the affordances of such assessment taking place in multimodal environments and being multimodal in itself. Implementing assessment multimodally involves not only catering for differentiated student needs and effectively harnessing the opportunities online platforms provide, such an approach also allows for greater accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities.

The paper concludes with some practical recommendations towards realigning assessment to be student-focussed and relevant for a dynamic post-COVID-19 university that is responsive to the needs of all students.

**Keywords:** *self-directed multimodal assessments, self-directed learning-oriented assessment, self-directed learning, multimodal learning, equitable assessment*

## **Power Relations, Disasters and Tertiary Education – Inequalities, inequities, individuals and institutions through earthquakes and the Covid19 crisis**

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### **Abstract**

Environmental hazards leading to disasters and crises during the recovery process itself (or sometimes without recovery) are made of multiple resilience trajectories, which are not deterministic in nature but which have socio-cultural and power-relation controls over the positioning of individuals and communities on these trajectory curves. The main controls are at multiple spatial and temporal scales, power-relations assigned by white-male dominant (in other words people just like myself) construct of our world.

Starting from two systematic systems of inequalities and inequities, which are the result of past- and present-power relationships, I propose a return from experience from Indonesia, as a first axiom that looks at White European Universities and their relations with the “non-white” and often “ex-colonies”, and how this system is biased towards them. The same inequality and inequity (being the absence of equality of chances in a society including differences, like women and men) at universities in Japan, and how simple male-female ratio at key positions is hampering the equality of chances of the next generation as well.

From these statements, I then invite you to reflect with me on what are the consequences of earthquakes, such as the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch (New Zealand) and the Covid19 crisis on institutions and on individuals.

Using recent publications on the topic, I am showing that the assumed gendered-roles determine the resilient and recovery trajectories, disfavoring even further women and minorities, even if institutions can rebound and sometimes rebound better. I also invite you to discuss the positive aspects of stopping all the foreign ‘gold-rushers’ from travelling thanks to Covid19, as I have named them with a group of colleagues, but the spatial distribution issues of vaccines are however, most likely to negatively impact emerging markets’ universities, over the long run.

## **Striking a balance between ensuring quality assessment and student centeredness during COVID-19: A case of online assessments for the Physiology class of 2020**

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### **Abstract**

This paper provides an observation-based analysis of the concerns and challenges that we, as teachers, faced in a bid to strike a balance between ensuring quality assurance in online assessments and staying true to a desire to deliver a truly student centered assessment experience to the students. The paper further discusses mechanisms to ensure quality, student-centered online-based assessments. While quality assurance in assessment covers a wide range of aspects such as assessment design, moderation, and feedback, we deliberately streamlined this paper to discuss the aspect of feedback and how it impacts student assessment for and of learning in an online learning environment. The findings, interventions and therefore conclusions arrived at in this paper are based mainly on our observations in the course of administering assessment to a 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Physiology at the University of Namibia. We conclude that when students cheat during the course of an assessment, they are less likely to engage with feedback that is given towards that assessment. Further, a teacher's knowledge of his/her students is more likely to help the teacher to give individualised student feedback that can go a long way into bridging the gap between current and intended learning. Lastly, we conclude that use of student agency in both assessment design and review can stand out to be the single most effective method of ensuring quality assessment with enhanced chances for lifelong learning.

## **Mobile computing devices as Learning and Teaching tools for Physical Education Student-Teachers during Teaching Practice at two selected Universities in Namibia**

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### **Abstract**

Proliferation of mobile computing devices, such as cellphones, smartphones, and tablet computers, in recent years has necessitated debates among various academic scholars around the world. This led to an assumption that, these devices can serve as alternative tools and avenues for student teachers to prepare for their lessons during the teaching practice phase 2. The purpose for this paper is to explore the perceptions of physical education student-teachers towards mobile computing devices as tools for learning and teaching during teaching practice phase 2 at two selected Universities in Namibia. The study is guided by the following objectives: to identify the applications used for learning and teaching by student teacher majoring in physical education; assess the perceptions of student-teachers towards the use of mobile computing devices as an alternative tool for learning and teaching; identify the challenges encountered when accessing and using mobile computing devices, and suggest strategies to be used by physical education student teachers to access and utilize mobile computing devices in the physical education lesson preparation or teaching. This qualitative study, will collect data from two online focus group discussions with the second and third years' student-teachers at the two selected universities in Namibia. The findings will highlight the frequently used mobile application by the students teachers, their motives and interests; the perceptions of student teachers towards the use of mobile computing devices as learning and teaching tools in physical education. Recommendations from the study will be used as guidelines for physical education student teachers at institutions of higher learning to enhance effective teaching and learning of physical education as a subject.

**Key words:** mobile computing, smartphones. Digital divide, teaching

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## **Where does quality fits in? Teaching digital information literacy skills in an Academic Library: A reflective practice paper.**

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents a reflection on quality assurance in teaching digital information literacy skills in an academic library. Contemporary librarians are longing for quality digital information literacy skills instruction, but strategies to ensure that this happens seems to be lacking in some institutions. The library has an important role to play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution era, and librarians act as instructors of digital information literacy skills to aid this important role. Being an academic librarian, serving the diverse population of users, the question on how one can ensure quality in instructional programmes becomes problematic. This paper tried to bring the face of where quality assurance meet with experiences in a journey of an academic librarian. The paradigm shift that has happened to our practice through the UNAM Postgraduate Diploma in High Education (PDHE), is analysed through the Transformative Learning Theory and perspective transformation as presented by Jack Mezirow (1978, 1981, 1994, 1997, 2000). Through practice, using Margret Archer's Social Realism theory's domains of structure, culture and agency, the case on how one sees quality fitting into teaching and learning of digital information literacy skills in an academic library is presented. The paper concluded by recommending solutions to the challenges encountered while teaching digital information literacy skills as an academic librarian.

**Key words:** Digital information literacy; information literacy skills; academic libraries, academic librarianship, library instruction, quality assurance and transformative learning.

## Teaching and Learning Strategy for online-based introductory programming courses: a practical approach

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### Abstract

The development of coding or programming skills has always been one of the most important challenges for students and teachers in the different areas of computing. In this regard, the relationship between problem-solving and programming skills is well-documented. Research shows that students with better problem-solving skills develop programming skills easier and quicker, regardless of the programming environment. On the other hand, the development of problem-solving skills is a whole area of research in pedagogical sciences that include elements of personality, learning styles, problem-solving techniques, and teaching-learning methodologies.

In programming, the teaching process should be centred on skills development for algorithmic modelling. Then, we use algorithmic modelling as a tool to solve problems related to computing. Lastly, algorithms are implemented using a programming language.

This paper proposes a pedagogical strategy based on a problem-based learning approach to develop specific programming problem-solving-related skills. The strategy focuses mainly on the learning organization, the specific objectives definition, the continuous assessment (and feedback) and the use of specific learning resources at each stage to achieve the general learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical model, programming teaching, programming learning strategy.

## Illustrated guide to support Object-Oriented Programming online learning in introductory courses

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### Abstract

The learning and development of computer programming skills using a paradigm such as object-oriented are not only essential for students of computer science and related careers, but it is also important for all programming-related courses because of the role that they play in the development of computational thinking. Associated with this teaching-learning process, there are several problems widely documented in the literature, such as poor development of algorithmic skills as a basis for solving computational problems, understanding of abstract concepts that support the paradigm, learning a specific language, etc. Most of the existing learning approaches focus on a particular programming language and not on the underlying problems. In addition, we can mention the challenge of online learning for a practical subject with a problem-based approach.

This work proposes the use of illustrated guides as learning objects for introductory object-oriented programming courses. With this, we aim to facilitate the teaching and learning of abstract concepts of programming without code-specific language, and the development of basic algorithmic modelling skills. Real-world analogies and visualizations are used to introduce abstract concepts to facilitate learning. We use this type of resource as part of a teaching-learning strategy oriented to the development of algorithmic modelling skills focused on the practical component from the perspective of an online course.

**Keywords:** Programming teaching, programming learning strategy, learning object, online learning, illustrated guide.

## Enhancing the quality of online assessment in higher education

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### Abstract

The devastating effect of Covid-19 have prompted educational practitioners to maximise efforts for ensuring continuous teaching, learning and assessment, by making use of instructional and assessment methods that do not involve human contact. The use of eLearning has since gained momentum, used for curriculum instruction and assessment. The purpose of this study was to establish the authenticity online assessment as used in higher education institutions, with the aim of advancing a model for ensuring an effective online assessment of curriculum content during and post-Covid-19 era. A desktop research methodology was used to gather data for the study. Published research articles on the challenges and effectiveness of online assessment were traced, reviewed and analysed according to predetermined topics of research interests. The findings from the review informed the themes that were interpreted and discussed as ultimate answers for the study. The interpretation of the themes draws insights from literature evidence and current observations in the field of online assessment.

The study established that online assessment was characterised by challenges that compromised its authenticity, thus not contributing to the effective mastery of learning outcomes by students. As students attempt assessment tasks on their own, it was difficult to establish if the submitted work was indeed their own or not. In addition, assessment tasks were too many and impractical for students to handle in a given time. Covid-19 pandemic requires that higher education institutions consider employing online instruction and assessment. However, online assessment methods should be authentic in design and implementation to reflect good quality teaching and learning. The study recommends that higher educational institutions should use online assessment methods that enhance objective and credible assessment such as administering synchronous activities and by customising assessment tasks for students.

**Keywords:** Online assessment, Authentic assessment, eLearning, Covid-19, Higher education

## Contextual Realities in High Education: Transformational Turn in a Digital Information Literacy Epoch

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on contextualising emerging realities in Higher Education using Barry Stierer as the means of bringing forth the criticality, reflexivity and praxis into one's own digital information literacy skills' scholarship of learning and teaching and its impact on academic libraries. This reflexivity is a result of one's practice as a young novice academic librarian who developed a passion in embracing digital information literacy skills. Taking note of the epoch of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Industrial eras, delivering quality digital information literacy skills to students and staff members demands the application of higher thinking order and pedagogical skills to equip the targeted audience competently. Contrarily, a radical shift in teaching digital information literacy instructions in an academic institution now require assessment of audience social background, competencies and knowledge to align programs learning outcomes accordingly. The discussion is relevant at present to tap into changes and disruptions that happened at the global, international, national, and institutional levels. This is done to aid contextualisation of user-based programmes in academic libraries to shape the scholarship of learning digital information literacy skills amongst its emerging clientele. Thus, recognition of lifelong learning skills through alignment of digital information literacy curriculum is equally important and should be revisited using appropriate pedagogical guidelines and HE assessment framework rather than relying on ad hoc one-shot program to ensure graduates exit outcomes are relevant with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution. The paper ultimate is to propose relevant interventions and pedagogical guidelines earmarked as essential for equipping academic librarians with appropriate competencies and knowledge base and be proactive and cognisant of techno-socio-cultural impacts facing the democratisation of knowledge and access to digital information widely.

**Key words:** Digital information literacy; academic libraries; library instruction.

## Improve Information Literacy Instruction for Students at Welwitchia Health Training Centre

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### Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to profile students to establish the baseline information literacy of students, which in turn could inform the development of information literacy provision to support learning, teaching and research at Welwitchia Health Training Centre (WHTC). The training interventions will enable students to make use of library information effectively to enhance learning and research. The paper addressed the main objective to profile the information literacy skills of the students at WHTC, with these sub-objectives: to ascertain student's reading culture and frequency of using library platforms, to determine how student access ICT for learning purposes, to determine the preferred training style for information literacy skills and to suggest practical ways to improve the students' information literacy skills. A quantitative approach through an online survey using Google forms questionnaire was used to collect data to create a descriptive profile across four campuses. An accidental sampling technique was used to select 104 students, provided written informed consent for their voluntary participation, and confidentiality was guaranteed. The study found that the reading culture and the frequency of visiting the library platform is low. It also found that students do not really visit the library platforms or the physical libraries and prefer to do other things rather than visiting the library. Further, the found students prefer learning through different learning styles of which motivation was the dominant learning platform. Based on the findings, it is recommended that information literacy skills should be included in the Institution's curriculum so as to attract students to the library. Librarians should play a role in cultivating and maintaining reading culture among students by creating conducive environments and acquiring resources that match with the ever-evolving academic reading practices. Library staff should revive and strength all the services to satisfy user's information needs.

**Key words:** Student profiling; information literacy; information communication and technology; learning and teaching.

## Ensuring the Quality of Online Learning in Higher Education

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### Abstract

Quality is outcomes produced by the higher educational institution. It addresses or offer a wide range of competitive criteria's on good exceptional learning goals that are suitable to the students. As online learning gained popularity or enormous trends due to the outbreak of Covid 19 Pandemic, higher education institutions around the globe employed online learning approach in their everyday teaching and learning, thus includes the University of Namibia. However the quality of online learning in higher education system, is measured on several attributes: excellent/exceptions, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation. Therefore, the study sought to analyse the quality of online learning in higher education institution to ensure if the eLearning provision objectives or aims meet and cater needs of students through different attributes and standards of quality assurance. The study will adopt a qualitative design using a single case study approach. It will be conducted at the University of Namibia Center for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) department. The study will employ three data collection techniques (online survey, semi structured interview guidelines and documentation). Data obtained will be strengthened through triangulation, peer reviews and experts judgement while it will be analysed by using thematic analysis themes. As quality depends on number of measures or standards the study will raise awareness and shed light on the quality of eLearning by reflecting on the outcomes or students' progress when students learn online compared to conventional learning and as to how quality is being maintained. The study will further recommend other institutions of higher learning to collect data and reflects on the whole process of online teaching and learning to ensure quality and proper planning for future eLearning.

**Keywords:** quality, assurance, online learning, higher education, standards

## Authentic Assessment's Integrity for Online Learning in Higher Education

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### Abstract

The universal pandemic of COVID-19 has led to the interruption of teaching and learning activities in many countries. Current social isolation policies have led to a general move to online education including assessment. Authentic assessment activities are those that give students chances to practice finding solutions to real-world issues and challenges, so that upon graduation they are able to apply these skills to issues and challenges they will face in their place of work. When students are able to do this successfully, they are judged as work ready. The society is concerned about the integrity of students being assessed online. Thus, there is a great need to find out strategies that institutions can take to ensure the integrity of online authentic assessment practices so that the society can be assured that the competencies of the program have been achieved by each student honestly. The study employs a mixed-method research to gather data from higher education educators and students through questionnaires, surveys and document analysis. A mixed method research design is chosen to answer what are the effective strategies for ensuring authentic assessment for online learning? Two sets of instruments (questionnaires and survey) is used to obtain information on the strategies to ensure integrity of the online authentic assessment. Ten educators from high education and ten students are selected as the respondents through purposive sampling technique. The findings will determine the effective strategies that high education institution can use to ensure the integrity of the online authentic assessment. The implications of this study will encourage the higher education institutions to use the effective strategies that ensure the integrity of the authentic assessment.

**Keywords:** authentic assessment, online learning, integrity, higher education



## **Using Moodle eLearning learning analytics to map students' learning preferences to develop customised learning content & assessment.**

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### **Abstract**

As the educational circumstances are ever-altering based on the need to have better production and outputs of candidates from the educational institutions, there has been a greater need for a change on how teaching and learning are taking place at such institutions. With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, numerous institutions had been required to migrate towards online learning by making use of eLearning Management Systems (LMS). Zhao (2011) pointed out that educational change in any country is aimed at cultivating diversity and encourage students to pursue their strengths in aspects such as unique talents, skills and knowledge, creativity, and ability to adapt to the new learning environments.

Students apply different learning styles when studying online content. Therefore, for educators to develop online content and assessment activities for students it is essential to contemplate the VARK (Visual, Auditory, Reading, and Kinesthetic) learnings styles. The application of online learning content designs and assessment requires a completely different pedagogical approach from educators, as such materials need to provide context to learning and simultaneously synergized with learning data that can be interpreted and make informed decisions as well as interventions in the learning process of the students. Online content design requires a fundamental complex layout and that should be data-driven when using learning analytics, therefore, educators when designing online content should consider learning activities that are related to being; Assimilative (educators information based on learning activities), Search and use (activities that are relating to students skill development), Communicative (activities that are related to improving communication skills), productive (activities that are related to active learning and engagement) experiential (activities that are related to students apply their knowledge to a real-world setting), interactive (activities based on simulation), and authentic assessment (designed to complement students ability). Hence, considering synergizing learning styles as well as assessment with learning analytics can provide a deeper understanding for educators of how students learn in an online

environment.

The proposed study will use the model of Felder-Silverman learning style model (FSLM) that mostly determines student learning style in an online learning environment at one of the selected campuses at the University of Namibia. The FSLM concept allows for the application of an index of learning style questionnaire that identifies best-suited learning styles for students. While using Moodle as the preferred Learning Management System (LMS) data can then be correlated between student behavior on the various learning content assessment and their learning styles.

eLearning Analytics (eLA) can be used to enhance students' learning preferences during an online module. Using learning analytics within a Learning Management System (LMS) allows educators to collect and analyse the necessary data of students that are enrolled in a particular module and consequently design online learning content and assessments based on students' learning preferences.

The study intends to establish whether there are meaningful impact on the online content and assessment design which is provided for student online engagement and learning. While students might notice their preferred choice of learning styles and assessments, it will be vital for educators to then identify students that are poorly performing in areas that might not be suitable enough for them to learn in the module. Resulting in module content and assessment being tailored to suit students' needs and create a personalized learning environment for students.

## Using Learning analytics to assess student participation in online discussion forums

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### Abstract

Literature supports the notion that students benefit from participating in discussions on the topics they are studying, as they add to the student's critical thinking skills. If conducted well, discussions are a place of highly stimulating student engagement with the course content. The added benefit of online discussion forums is the fact that students are exposed to the "writing to learn" or "learning by writing" pedagogy by being forced to write their thoughts thus leading to the student achieving a better understanding of what they are writing about. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, modules in 2020 and 2021 were facilitated online, thus providing an ideal setting to study students' participation in online discussion forums.

The authors studied students' participation in online discussion forums in a number of modules offered in two diverse departments at the University of Namibia, namely the Department of Social Sciences and Department of Pharmacy Practice & Policy. Using learning analytics available through Moodle's Logs, Course Participation, Activity Report and Statistics, student participation in online forums were quantitatively evaluated. Data from taught and supervised modules were extracted from Moodle, cleaned, compiled and visualised in graphical form for analysis. Key findings include that students' participation in online discussions is greater when their participation contributes to the continuous assessment mark and when the discussion forms part of the course announcements. The researchers recommend including students' participation in discussion forums to the continuous assessment marks for a module.

**Keywords:** Learning analytics, online discussion forums, student participation, formative and learning assessment

## Research and Publication in Higher Education Institutions

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### Abstract

Research is increasingly becoming a cross-cutting discipline in institutions of higher education all over the world. Academic programmes are continually upgraded to remain competitive and relevant, with the inclusion of research modules taking centre stage. Increased academic programmes with a research component imply that a lot of research is trending across academic programmes in institutions of higher education. Despite a high volume of research being undertaken in higher education institutions, the volume of publication of the research output from higher education institutions do not equate the volume of research undertaking. This study intends to explore how higher education institutions can maximise their research and publication output.

A desktop research methodology will be used to gather data. Published research articles about research and publications in high education institutions will be reviewed and analysed according to predetermined topics. The analysis of the data from the review will inform the themes that will be interpreted and discussed as ultimate answers for the study. The interpretation of the themes will be guided by literature evidence and current observations by the researcher. The ultimate answers will inform the conclusions and recommendations in respect of improving the volume of research and publication in institutions of higher education.

**Keywords:** Research, Publication, Higher education

## **Integrating e-learning in the teaching and learning of Ethnomathematics embedded in the Veekuhane people of the Zambezi region in Namibia: Phenomenological Study**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses and reveals the pedagogical approach using e-learning that connects the cultural aspects of

mathematics within the Veekuhane people and its linkage to ethnomodeling. Purposive sampling was used and a sample of 15 informants, comprising 9 females and 6 males was selected from the Veekuhane community of Zambezi region based on their distinct cultural knowledge and purpose of the study. The data was collected through document analysis of archival documents and government sources, observations, digital sources (such video clips) and semi-structure interviews for the purpose of triangulation of facts, emerging themes as well as patterns. The research is an in-depth and greater insight into the Veekuhane mathematics embedded in their livelihood.

The research also revealed that the Veekuhane indigenous mathematics knowledge (VIMK) is stored people's memories, traditional number systems, languages, fables, poems, role plays, storytelling, memory tests and activities expressed in stories, puzzles, riddles, folklore, proverbs, idioms, traditional games and songs. Furthermore, their artefacts illustrated geometry in terms of spaces, spatial, shapes, size, relative position of figures, patterns, lines, symmetry and measurements. The beneficiaries of the study are the communities, schools, institutions of higher learning, the two ministries of education and educational fraternities.

**Key words:** Ethnomathematics, ethnomodeling, e-learning, artefacts, VIMK.

## A Critical Analysis of Curriculum Transformation at UNAM

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### Abstract

The contemporary issues in Namibia and the rest of the world as well as an institution transformation at University of Namibia (UNAM). This paper zooms through micro and macro-lens of curriculum transformation at UNAM. Although, the much anticipated transformation has come at UNAM, we cannot turn a blind eye on challenges and direct impacts on the current system viz. the period of time, changes need to take place. The change we want, the UNAM we want, remains an excellent vision, but the steps towards it, still needs to be critically analysed. Research shows that there is a high imbalance between basic education and higher education, this bring us to three critical points to reflect on: (i) the entry requirements to higher institutions of learning, which is never uniform across Namibia, (ii) massification vis-a-vis limited specialized programs in higher institutions of learning and (iii) quality assurance in all spectra of the institutions curriculum. This paper will focus on how UNAM is responding swiftly to address challenges faced by the Ministry of Education, Harambee PP1 & PP2 and Fourth/fifth Industrial Revolution (4IR&5IR). The above pertinent points will bring key initiatives and diversity in respect to ways of quality Learning and Teaching. This is so imperative in our Namibian system because traditional education have been ignored in respect to their value addition to formal education system. The paper will conclude by recommending how best the curriculum transformation process can be used to effectively address learning and teaching in the 5IR.

**Keywords:** Curriculum Transformation, Harambee PP2, Traditional Knowledge, 4IR and 5IR

## Online Learning Experiences and Perceptions of Students with Disabilities at the University of Namibia

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### Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic in Namibia raised significant challenges to higher education. Consequently, it disrupted traditional ways of learning and teaching. More specifically, the University of Namibia (UNAM) fully transitioned to online learning and teaching. This form of higher education provision presented both opportunities and challenges to differently-abled students. Thus, a need to rethink the learning process and innovate best practices in delivering online education to students with disabilities. This includes communication of special needs to lecturers, fair e-assessments time allocation, design of adaptable eLearning platform spaces and accessibility formats. Student-to-lecturer and lecturer-to-disability unit relationships in the learning processes of students with disabilities is crucial to ensure inclusive learning resources. Lecturers need to know whether they have students with special needs in their classes and plan on inclusive teaching practices. The study seeks to explore the students-lecturers relationship in the learning processes of students with disabilities, their online learning experiences and perceptions post COVID-19 and assistive technologies at their disposal, thereof. It is recommended to improve the student-lecturer interaction and accessibility of learning resources in learning environments for students with disabilities. Both qualitative and quantitative research approach with an exploratory research design will be adopted to inform the study. A purposive convenience sampling technique using a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview will be used as data collection tools through the UNAM Disability Unit.

**Keywords:** Lecturers, Students, Disability, Education, Technology, Inclusion

## **An assessment on high education institutions readiness on curriculum reform during Covid-19 pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

Blended mastering has been proposed as one solution that can decorate scholar mastering and engagement, enhance get right of entry to and flexibility, and tackle organizational and institutional imperatives in higher education. Therefore this study aimed at assessing the high education institutions readiness on their curriculum transformation during covid-19 pandemic. The study employed qualitative method approach where a case study design was used. Furthermore, the study involved 45 participants from five faculties at International University of Management using focus group discussion as a method to collect data. The data obtained were analysed using content thematic approach. The major findings of this study are; the educators have pragmatic approaches they have employed for their teaching and learning, namely synchronous teaching and learning and then asynchronous learning and using the new online approaches lead to boredom, sense of isolation, lack of time to follow the different subjects, and lack of self-organizing capabilities among students. In addition the results showed that those involved must improve their understanding and readiness for this new teaching and learning process. The study established that in order to fully integrate online learning and teaching methodologies in higher education institutions, educators and students must both be fully committed. This requires more skills and training for both educators and students to be able to fully migrate to a new mode of teaching and learning. This can be achieved by employing open on-line guides to build MOOCs (massive open on-line courses), the requirements are higher than open on-line courses. And an exact path resource requires robust financial and technical support within the institutions of high learning. Hence the study concluded that these challenges can still be addressed as there are already some educators who have know how to use online teaching and learning approaches and only require financial and resources support.



## Use of Technology to Morph Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Post Covid-19 Era

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### Abstract

Since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, many educational institutions in the world, swiftly adopted online teaching mode as a mean of teaching and learning to curtail the spread of the disease, especially in Africa- high education institutions where mainly mode of teaching was face to face before the pandemic. Today, number of cases and deaths have decreased significantly, and life slowly come to normal. Despite the significant reduction of COVID-19 cases and the related deaths, some higher education institutions may decide to continue with online teaching while some may choose blended learning mode. The reasons being to prevent against COVID-19, other future pandemics, save time, improves teaching, economy of stakeholders. Other institutions are not yet deciding the way forward. As academics we have experienced and witnessed both lecturers and students complain of online platforms, this includes long hours of screen time, connectivity/bandwidth issues, chaos in the home atmosphere, difficult to apply some teaching methods, poor quality of online assessments, substandard and non-uniform platforms, cyber-attacks in higher education institutions. This means that learning institutions are now more vulnerable than before. A good example of a recent exposure is the attacks on the Zoom platform used by most of higher education institutions in Africa. Also, basic communication and information technology remains a distant dream in Africa, as of January 2021, the internet penetration rate in the region was at 62 percent, whereas in Namibia it stood at 51% in January 2020. Meantime, we cannot ignore the digital era we are now in, it needs to be embraced. Using a contextual reflection, this paper seeks to investigate and suggest the right path to follow in higher education institutions in Africa/Namibia context in this digital era without denying access to education or compromising key learning domains.

**Key words:** Online teaching and learning; digital era, pandemic and online platforms.

## Remote Shared Microcontroller Application Validation System for Practical Education During Pandemics and Beyond

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### Abstract

Engineering education requires laboratory work for reinforcing learning. Access to physical laboratory equipment enables students to input stimuli into and collect data from the equipment for analysis, interpretation, and validation of experimental design. Microcontroller Integrated Circuits (ICs) and development boards are important physical equipment for embedded system courses at the University of Namibia. However, the limited number of development boards, growing student numbers and the current COVID-19 pandemic have introduced new challenges, due to the introduction of online learning.

Online learning at the University of Namibia, had the potential of limiting practical work in microcontroller based courses. This would have rendered the courses invalid. This was counteracted by allowing students to use university microcontroller development boards from home. This worked in the year 2021, because of the then low number of students in comparison to the number of available development boards. It is, however, anticipated that the number of students taking the course will increase from 14 to over 60 in the year 2022 and beyond, due to the inclusion of Electrical Engineering students into the course, surpassing the number of available development boards.

A system for remote access to microcontroller development boards is being developed in this project to address the problem of the limited available boards. A set of physical development boards will be located in the university's laboratory. Students will be able to validate their developed, assembled/compiled machine instructions with a remote microcontroller through a specially designed webpage from anywhere in the world. The operation of the microcontroller will be continuously monitored and the binary value of each microcontroller terminal will be transmitted using web sockets back to the web page for display. Figure 1 illustrates the web view part of the system under development.

## **Challenges of e-Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic: Perspectives Of University Nursing Students From A Resource-Constraint Setting.**

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### **Abstract**

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions worldwide shut down to curb the spread of the virus. Thus globally, immediate response of educational institutions was to resort to e-learning as a means to continue education during this pandemic. This was also the case in Namibia, where a public university resorted to use of Moodle as a learning management system for all programme during the pandemic. In addition, other tools used to facilitate teaching and learning during lockdowns are WhatsApp, Telegram, Google meeting, Zoom and emailing. Although e-learning has been actively used in higher education for the past two decades, there are students who have never been introduced to e-learning prior to COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the 2020 final year university nursing students at a public university, who have been taught all courses via face-to-face mode since beginning of their training. Their experiences, perceptions and challenges on e-learning are not yet known since no prior assessment was done in this setting.

Therefore, a qualitative - explorative design was conducted at a campus of a public university located in north-eastern Namibia. Face to face interviews were conducted with 12 nursing students who were conveniently selected, an interview guide was used during the interviews. A voice recorder was used for audio recording. Thereafter, all data were verbatim transcribed, followed by content analysis. The themes emanated from this study as challenges of university nursing students on e-learning during COVID-19 pandemic are e-learning not suitable for practical components; connectivity issues; infrastructures and resources related challenges; computer illiterate and limited skills on the use of e-learning and challenges related to assessment of learning.

Nursing students found e-learning not to be conducive for learning, teaching, and assessing practical component of nursing as they are required to demonstrate clinical competencies. Consequently, nursing students were

anxious due to lack of practical opportunities. Other challenges such as connectivity issues; infrastructures and resources related challenges; computer illiterate and limited skills on the use of e-learning and challenges related to assessment of learning requires the university to involve supportive staff to assist with preparation of students and lecturers on the use of e-learning platform. In addition, there is a need to partner with internet service providers for improvement of connectivity as well as infrastructures and resources required for successful implementation of e-learning.

## **Challenges Faced by the Airline Industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Case Study of two Southern Africa Airlines (South African Airways and Westair Aviation).**

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### **Abstract**

The study focuses on the challenges faced by the airline industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century negatively impacting on the performance of the two southern Africa airlines (WestAir Aviation Airline and South African Airways). The study investigated the challenges faced by the two southern Africa airlines (WestAir Aviation Airline and South African Airways) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, factors which led to these challenges and the impacts the challenges brought to the airlines. Case study research design was used in order to acquire information and draw conclusions about the challenges faced by the airline industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially in the Southern African Development Community. The study targeted reported challenges faced by two airlines (SAA and WestAir Aviation) from the year 2015 to the year 2020 and in addition two key informants from each airline complemented the population. The research instrument used for data collection was a laptop. A laptop was used during the data collection method to record the zoom interview meetings between the interviewer and the respondents and the data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. From the findings and discussions, it was established that a small population, competition from the road transportation, political interference, lack of suitable domestic airports within the country, load factors, travelling demands, travel restrictions and lack of tourist traveling in the country are among the main factors leading to the challenges faced by the two southern Africa airlines. From the study it is recommended that the government (Transport community) needs to give approval as soon as possible when airlines are requesting for new routes. For instance; WestAir Aviation needs to introduce new frequencies and destinations, they need to have their aircraft in the air most of the times and last but not least suitable airports are needed all over the country (Namibia) in strategic locations. For South African Airways it is recommended that privatization is the way forward to have chances overcoming the identified challenges.

**Key words:** Airline challenges, Transport community, Political interference, Load factors, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Domestic Airports

## **Experiences and challenges of learning under the COVID-19 pandemic: A case of the Lifelong Learning and Community Education students at the University of Namibia.**

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### **Abstract**

The coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and the greatest challenge we have faced since World War Two. Although the year 2021 draws to a close, the higher education sector continues to grapple with the effects of COVID-19. For instance, the pandemic compelled educational institutions to migrate to 100% online learning and teaching platforms that have presented many new experiences and challenges at both an institutional (University of Namibia) and student's level. In this paper, an exploratory case study design of the qualitative research approach was used to explore experiences and challenges of learning and teaching under COVID-19 among Lifelong Learning and Community Education Students at the University of Namibia. The research questions were: 1) What are the challenges experienced by students of the University of Namibia with regard to online learning and teaching? 2) How can those challenges be addressed at an individual and institutional level? 3) What could be done to make online learning and teaching more effective and exciting? Data were gathered through semi-structured interview guide using a focus group discussions held virtually with six (6) undergraduate full-time students. The thematic analytical approach was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that student's challenges included amongst others, lack of preparedness by students to entirely learn and be taught online, lack of personalized feedback from lecturers, heavy workload on student's side, poor internet connectivity issues and challenges of learning and being taught from home. This paper recommends more studies on the impact of the pandemic to the educational system.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, experiences, challenges

## A Critical Analysis of the Narratives of Curriculum Transformation post-COVID-19 at the University of Namibia (UNAM)

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### Abstract

Higher education landscape demand for constant and continuous curriculum transformation to ensure relevance and responsiveness to the global and national imperatives as well as industry and societal needs. Like other universities across the globe, UNAM has been challenged by the rapid changes of the world of work and the advent of the remote virtual mode of deliveries in teaching and learning during COVID-19. At the same time, there was auditing of programmes for viability followed by change in management, staff downsizing, restructuring and curriculum transformation. The purpose of this paper is therefore to present the experiences and lessons learnt from the critical analysis of narratives of curriculum transformation at the University of Namibia, which came about as part of the institutional transformation nicknamed: "THE UNAM WE WANT." The critical analysis is zooming into the narratives from macro to micro levels of curriculum transformation. The methodology engaged by the researchers in order to illuminate the meaning of personal stories and events was the qualitative narrative inquiry. Researchers collected data by recording the narratives of the curriculum transformers as part of the university transformation process. Forty (40) lecturers were targeted. Each of the four researchers had to reach out to a minimum of 10 curriculum transformers. The narratives were guided by probing questions to enable the participants to align their stories to the purpose of the study.

The findings allude to the fact that UNAM responded swiftly to address the global and local challenges, the legislative requirements, the strategic plans, regulations and guidelines from the regulatory bodies pertaining to Higher Education Institutions and at the same time paved its way to a transformed institution. The findings further revealed that there were challenges during the curriculum transformation process. The interferences were related to the time

span, the obligatory changes, the national requirements and the disruption of the usual events.

Additionally, the study found out that relevance and responsiveness is anchored onto rethinking learning and teaching, reimagining curriculum, engaging innovative teaching strategies and the diversified assessment strategies required post-COVID-19. In addition, the researchers found out that even though accelerating curriculum transformation was not pleasant, it is imperative in the ever-changing world to remain unlimited. This study is part of a bigger research project approved by the UNAM Ethics Committee and granted permission to access UNAM staff for collecting data on the experiences and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 remote virtual learning and teaching.

**Keywords:** narrative inquiry, curriculum transformation, curriculum relevance, curriculum responsiveness, rethinking learning and teaching, innovative teaching strategies, diversified, assessment strategies and reimagining curriculum post-COVID-19



## Curriculum transformation in the digital era: The pros and cons

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### **Abstract**

The current COVID19 pandemic transformed nearly all systems of human interaction including the higher education structures. The pandemic came unexpectedly and compelled many institutes of higher education to shift hastily from the traditional campus based contact mode to online mode. This has also necessitated the hasty transformation of the existing curriculums so that they meet the online mode expectancies. The transformations of the curriculums had to consider the needs of all the relevant stakeholders involved (the institutes, the lecturers, students, parents, employers). This also necessitated the need to retool professional educators to conform to the new developments. Besides, the transformation required the reviewing of the existing of curriculum transformation models (curriculum inclusion; curriculum infusion; curriculum deconstruction and transformation) and weigh them against the new online approach and their relevance. This papers explores firstly, the advantages of transforming the curriculum in a digital era and also as means to mitigate some of the challenges instigated by the advent of COVID19. Secondly, it probes some of the challenges that the relevant stakeholders encounter in the process of transforming the curriculum in the digital era.

The paper hypothesise that the transformation of the curriculums though a brilliant idea, is a major impediment in higher education mostly in 'developing countries' like Namibia where technology is not as advanced as that in some European or American countries. The transformed curriculums should be relevant and provide timely information to stakeholders involved yet some developing countries are still at some lower stages of development to be eligible for digitalisation of the curriculum in higher education.

## **Remote learning and teaching in teacher education during the Covid19 era: a Zimbabwean teachers' college experiences.**

*Havatidi Madzamba*

### **Abstract**

The arrival of Covid19 at the end of 2019 put unexpected pressures in all education of settings, teacher education included. The traditional face to face pedagogic methodologies were rendered too risky a practice, hence was shelved leaving 1.6 billion students without concrete alternative schooling options (Maharaj-Landaeta Sunita, 2020). Alternative methods of teaching and learning had to be employed in pre-service teacher education. Educators worldwide were forced to shift their pedagogic styles from in-person to remote teaching in a short space of time. Educators had to adapt and adopt online methods of teaching and learning which they were not really prepared for. Consequently they faced a myriad of challenges like finding suitable online tools, creating online content and online synchronous and asynchronous pedagogic styles, to mention just but a few. How has Zimbabwe's teacher education institutions transitioned to prolonged remote teaching and learning?

In this paper, we detail findings of how one Zimbabwe teacher training college custom-built Moodle as a remote teaching and learning platform of the pre-service teachers during the Covid19 stretch from 2020 to 2021. To learn more about how the idea originated and came to fruition the college lecturers and information technology staff were interviewed. To understand the learners (pre-service teachers) experiences with the platform twenty students were interviewed. The study underscores the need for all educational institutions, educators, and learners to adopt technology, and improve their digital skills in line with the emerging global trends and realities in education.

## **Navigating domestic and career responsibilities as female staff members during the COVID-19 period: Towards an enabling working environment in Higher Education in the era of digital education.**

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### **Abstract**

This paper explores how a group of female staff members from the University of Namibia (UNAM) managed, in a changed working environment, to perform their work duties from home during COVID-19 and developed sustainable approaches in the era of digital education. Amidst the onslaught of COVID-19, losing more than 13 university colleagues, as well as family and friends, staff were still required to function under the “new normal”.

The development of these responsive strategies resulted from juggling between teaching through online platforms, handling student queries, creating strategies to provide good customer service, marking tests and examinations, keeping students motivated, coupled with the traditional domestic responsibilities that cannot be escaped. They also had to keep up with their professional duties, balance family life, help their own children with schoolwork, clean, cook, take care of the sick and comfort those who lost family members through COVID-19. It further entailed adjusting home environments into workstations and the implementation of an entire new set of rules introducing “no noise zones” while working the expected 8-5pm working hours from home. Some UNAM females came together through the establishment of a reading group, sharing their different narratives by unpacking their daily challenges and achievements through a WhatsApp group, and finding time and space to meet on a Saturday via Zoom. These meetings continue with great joy and excitement, with mentors from various other institutions providing encouragement and support. This paper argues that there is a need for Higher Education institutions to open up discussions around the creation of enabling environments in the era of digital education and support of females under the “new normal”.

The paper asserts that both spaces of work, be it the household or workspace, matter in the digital era and to women in Higher Education. In feminist debates, arguments around these two spaces have been determined and give expression to women's agency. It is therefore argued that more discussion and attention needs to be given on the resolution of support and care of females involved in both spaces. This paper therefore considers how women at the University of Namibia from different divisions and disciplines find their own space in order to not only support and listen to each other, but celebrate their "togetherness" in a digital space.

This article will also outline how UNAM females connected in the era of digital education. It further contributes to the discussions on navigating between domestic responsibilities and professional duties. Consequently, the article recommends ways to strengthen mentorship programs through continuous professional development at UNAM and in higher education academic institutions in Namibia, and how the SADC region could assist in this changing digital era.

