

BULLETIN

February 2015

FROM THE GUEST EDITOR, *Jenny Roberts*, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)



Welcome to the 1st bulletin of 2015 of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA). ODLAA, although predominantly an association representing Australian interests in Distance Education, has members from all over the world. I am privileged as a South African committee member to edit this month's edition, particularly in the light of South Africa hosting the 26th ICDE conference in October at the resort of Sun City. The Big 5 animals depicted in the picture above reside in the Pilansberg Game Reserve which adjoins Sun City and game drives to view these magnificent animals have been arranged to form part of the excursions for delegates to the conference.

NEW ODLAA WEBSITE

Watch Out...On March 20th ODLAA is releasing a new website which will feature a fresh and more engaging look and feel, providing an opportunity for members to be more actively involved with the organization.

ODLAA WEBINARS

The ODLAA series of professional development webinars has run very successfully for the past three years, and we now have a collection of eight webinar recordings available on the

website for your perusal (go to www.odlaa.org and click on 'News & Events' to see the whole list).

With a focus on practical experience we have hosted a number of experts from Australia and overseas who have shared their knowledge and advice on a wide range of topics of interest to practitioners in the field of open and distance education. Now we'd like to find out more about our 'membership base' – what have you been up to in your own line of enquiry and application?

We can see from registrations to our webinars that you are working in many different fields – from school based education, through community, vocational, higher and professional learning areas. We're sure you've got your own experiences in ODL to share! So we'd like to host a showcase opportunity for your contribution through our Webinar series.

Why would you?

- Did you know you can use this like a conference presentation? At UTAS, presenters reference these using the same process with a link to website recordings.
- Would you just like to flag research in progress? Even if you haven't gathered or analysed much data, it can be a good opportunity to get suggestions or ideas.
- It's an opportunity to recruit research partners! You might find others in the audience who would like to collaborate.

If you can give a short PowerPoint presentation to colleagues, then you can present in an online webinar. It's technically easy – and Jo will arrange to have a practice session with you beforehand if you are new to the system.

When would you?

We'll aim for a 'Research bytes' Webinar session in late May.

If you would like to make a **short (10 mins) presentation** on your research/investigations/questions on a theme of relevance to Open or Distance Learning, please send an EoI email **by 1st April** direct to Jo.Osborne@utas.edu.au . We'll get in contact with you with our decision on suitability and organise a program.

Please include in your email:

- Your suggested Topic and a sentence or two of description.
- Your name and email contact.
- Your organisation and role.

Submissions may be accepted from anyone working in the field, so share this information with your colleagues. (Preference will be given to ODLAA members if we receive a large number.)

If this proves successful we could make it an annual event!

For any comments and suggestions relating to the ODLAA Webinar program, please contact Jo.Osborne@utas.edu.au on forthcoming events that may be of interest to ODLAA members.

We are delighted to welcome webinar participants from the USA and New Zealand, as ODLAA webinars are now also advertised to members of DEANZ.

A link to all the webinar recordings can be found on the ODLAA website:

<http://www.odlaa.org/>

CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

ICDE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2015



The International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) World Conference is held every two years, hosted by a member institution. During the closing ceremony of the most recent world conference in Tianjin, China, in October 2014, it was announced that Unisa will host the 26th ICDE World Conference in 2015. This is the first time the event will be hosted in Africa, and follows Unisa's hosting of a highly successful ICDE Standing Conference of Presidents meeting in 2010.

The conference is being held at the acclaimed Sun City resort which is a 2-hour drive from the OR Tambo international airport in Johannesburg. Sun City neighbours the famous Pilansberg Game Reserve which is also host to the Big 5. If the photo above of the Big 5 (Lion, Rhino, Elephant, Buffalo and Leopard) whetted your appetite for practicing distance education among the wildlife of Africa, then here is your opportunity to do just that.

Unisa is proud to host this conference and we are looking forward to welcoming guests from all over the world to join us under the beauty of the African skies.

The call for papers is now open and more information can be found on the official conference website www.unisa.ac.za/icde2015. This call closes on 31 March 2015 so you still have time to send in your proposal to present whether it is a full paper, a Pecha Kucha or a poster presentation.

The theme of the conference is "Growing capacities for sustainable distance e-learning provision", and papers are invited from the following conference tracks:

Track 1: ODeL policy, governance and sustainability

Track 2: Changing contexts

Track 3: Quality

Track 4: Curriculum development, pedagogy and assessment

Track 5: Student success, retention and support

Track 6: Research and the scholarship of teaching and learning

Track 7: Affordances and acceptance of established and emerging technologies

Track 8: Professional development and learning/growing capacity

Proposals are invited for three types of presentations:

- Papers (Time allocated: 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes for questions)
- Pecha Kucha or lightning style presentations (Time allocated: 20 slides, 20 seconds per slide, ±8 minutes, plus 2 minutes for questions).
- Poster presentations. Posters can depict research or evaluation findings, outline a research process or describe a programme.

A line up of prominent keynote speakers has been assembled from all the corners of the globe and these include:

Prof MS Makhanya
Prof Laura Czerniewicz
Tolly Mbwette
Godson Gatsha
Aziza Ellozy
John Traxler
Alan Tait
Asha Kanwar
Santosh Panda
Yuk-Shan Wong
Joyce Seitzinger
Wayne Mackintosh
Audrey Watters
Harold Jarche
Tressie McMillan Cottom
Stella Porto



mLearn 2015

14th World conference on mobile and contextual learning

Venice, Italy

17-24 October 2015

The International Association for Mobile Learning (IAMLearn) (www.iamlearn.org) is the custodian of the mLearn conference series. mLearn is the leading annual international conference for researchers, policy makers, educators, developers and solutions providers in the fields of mobile, ubiquitous and contextual learning, and learning with emerging ambient and wearable technologies, attracting participants from more than 60 countries.

CONFERENCE DATE:

The mLearn 2015 international mobile learning conference will take place from 17 to 24 October 2015, on a cruise ship departing from Venice, Italy. Pre-conference Workshops will take place on 18 October 2015. This fourteenth annual conference on mobile and contextual learning is the key research and networking event for researchers, strategists, educators, technologists and industry practitioners from all over the world. mLearn attracts a large number of participants from more than 60 countries representing all continents, and is, therefore, the world's largest international conference on mLearning and emerging ambient technologies.

CONFERENCE THEME:

The mobile learning voyage: from small ripples to massive open waters

The conference will fulfil the need for stimulating critical debate on and research into theories, approaches, principles, applications and the implementation of mLearning. It will provide an opportunity for professionals and practitioners to share their knowledge, experience and research in the various areas where mLearning is applied.

The conference programme will make provision for leading, invited keynote speakers, pre-conference workshops, full and short papers, poster presentations, roundtables and debates, special focus sessions, and practical events including technology, product and service demonstrations. The conference will also host an exhibition area, where the latest trends and a series of vendor presentations and demonstrations will be available.

The objectives for the conference have been defined as follows:

- To promote the development of mLearning, globally, but especially in developing countries.
- To stimulate critical debate on and research into theories, approaches, principles and applications of mLearning.
- To share local and international developments, experiences and lessons learned.
- To promote networking and business opportunity development.
- To encourage the study and implementation of mobile applications in teaching and learning.
- To stimulate and assist personal professional development and the development of new skills for educators.
- To provide a forum for education and knowledge transfer.
- To facilitate dialogue, sharing and networking between diverse cultures with regard to the optimum use of emerging technologies.

Topics of interest are:

- From pilot projects to mainstream implementation: strategies for the large-scale deployment of mLearning
- Mobile technology to support open and distance learning (ODL)
- Mobile technology for teaching and learning support
- Assessment techniques and practices in mLearning
- Design and development of learning material for mLearning
- Learning objects and metadata for mLearning
- Informal and lifelong learning with the aid of mobile technology
- Challenges for mLearning in developing countries
- mLearning as a tool for social change
- Building and implementing mLearning strategies in educational institutions, companies and public sector organisations
- mLearning management systems (mLMSs)
- Creating interactive and collaborative mLearning environments
- Future trends in mLearning technology, including the impact of emerging technologies
- Emerging hardware and software for mLearning
- Location-aware technologies
- Contextual and situated learning
- Augmented reality
- Serious gaming and simulations
- Ambient intelligence and ubiquitous learning
- Innovation in learning theory and pedagogy

Who should attend?

This event brings together some of the leading researchers and practitioners in the field of mLearning. It also appeals to a wide range of audiences who are interested in enhancing learning with designing content and developing systems for mobile devices and wireless networks.

Abstract submission information:

Submissions may be made in the following participation/presentation categories:
Full papers, poster presentations, panels/roundtables, technical showcases, product/service presentations and pre-conference workshops.

For further details regarding the presentation categories, submission guidelines and more information, as well as to submit an abstract, visit the mLearn 2015 conference website at: <http://www.mlearn2015.org>

Important dates:

- Closing date for the submission of abstracts – 27 March 2015.
- Last date for early-bird registration – 1 July 2015
- Notification of acceptance – 4 May 2015
- Full paper submission – 1 August 2015
- Full paper and/or slide show for Technology Showcases – 1 September 2015

Registration:

Information with regards to registration categories and registration fees for the mLearn 2015 conference is available online at: <http://www.mlearn2015.org>

Conference proceedings:

The Conference Proceedings will be published by Springer. An edited post-conference publication, that will include a selection of the most relevant and influential papers, will be published in the International Journal for Mobile and Blended Learning (IJMBL).

Venue:

Royal Caribbean Cruise Ship: Splendour of the Seas

Departure (return): Venice, Italy

ODLAA NATIONAL FORUM AND THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL STEMFEST¹ PERTH, AUSTRALIA 2016

In September 2014, a meeting held between representatives of the STEM2 States 3Incorporated and Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia discussed STEM States Incorporated's desire to host an education conference focused on open, flexible, distance education and elearning in Perth in 2016, as part of their Festival of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics education and innovation. Murdoch University in

¹ "STEMfest" refers to the International Festival of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, an event organised by the STEM States Incorporated.

² "STEM" refers to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

³ STEM States" or "Global STEM States" refers to the STEM States Incorporated, a not for profit association incorporated in Australia.

Western Australia will host the 3rd International STEMfest in Perth, Western Australia in 2016.

STEMFest is a festival of conferences run over a two-week period in a different country each year. ODLAA would run its conference separately with its own brand and logo. Under the broad Festival theme of *Smart Economic Development*, each country gives a specific focus, with each of the conferences adapting this theme to their own particular approach.

Last year's event in Malaysia involved 1200 educators from 55 countries with a varied range of backgrounds from K-12, Tertiary and TAFE sectors, with a focus on skills development. Between the 27th September and 3rd October 2015 the 2nd International STEMfest will be held in Saskatoon, Canada, with an estimated 1200 delegates from over 55 countries attending. Further information is to be found on <http://stemstates.org/stemfest-2015.html>. This event will be the precursor to the 3rd International STEMfest in Perth, Australia and presents a strong marketing opportunity to attract delegates from North America to attend the ODLAA National Conference and STEMfest in Perth in 2016.

ODLAA would be included in the organising committee for Perth, 2016. It is anticipated that there will be around 8-10 separate conferences, planned so that delegates can register and pay to cover more than one conference, either concurrently or consecutively. There will be an Exhibition /Innovation Hall, with ODLAA including ICTs and ODL exhibition booths. The STEM Committee will handle all logistics, with a global marketing and ODLAA will assist with marketing, promotion and exhibitions. At this stage, there has been a hold put on the Perth Convention Centre last week of October to first week of November 2016.

REPORT ON SPECIAL THEMED ISSUE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION VOL 36(2). MAY 2015.

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND TIME: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGING TIME, WORKLOAD, AND COSTS

Drs Elena Barberà, Thomas Hülsmann and Jennifer Roberts (Guest Editors) invited contributions to the special themed issue of "*Distance Education*", Volume 36/2, which will be published in May 2015.

After scrutinizing the many abstracts that were submitted by the deadline of 15 August 2014, the editors invited the authors with the most relevant and best quality abstracts to submit their full papers by 31 October 2014. At the time of going to press, many of these articles have been submitted and are now in the process of being sent for peer review. The editors are certain that this very important topic of time and workload in Distance Education will make a significant and necessary contribution to our field.

Focus of special theme

While time, as in learning time and teacher workload, seems critical in most forms of distance education (including higher education, open schooling or non-formal education), it has rarely been examined in a comprehensive manner. The journal distance education seeks to address this gap by publishing contributions to a special issue on the theme "distance education and time: instructional and organizational implications for managing time, workload, and costs".

NOMINATIONS FOR POSITIONS ON ODLAA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ODLAA e-AGM will be held during the week 27 April to 1 May 2015. Further details will be communicated with you closer to the time.

In the meantime there are certain vacancies on the executive committee due to some members retiring and others who will be stepping down due to the end of their 2 year term. These members are eligible for re-nomination for a further 2 year term.

Dear ODLAA Members,

ODLAA is seeking nominations for the following positions on the ODLAA Executive Committee:

- **President**
- **Secretary**
- **Publications Officer**
- **3 x Member Representatives**

Each position is for a 2 year period commencing immediately following the eAGM which is scheduled for the week commencing Monday 27 April 2015.

If you would like to nominate for one of these positions, please email your nomination to the ODLAA administrative officer at exec@odlaa.org, and include the names of two (2) financial ODLAA members who have agreed to support your nomination.

Please use the following wording:

I [name], a current financial member of ODLAA, submit my nomination for the position of [executive position].

My nomination is supported by [name 1, email 1] and [name 2, email 2] who are both current financial members of ODLAA.

Please submit your nomination by no later than 5pm (AEDT) on 27 March 2015.

FEATURED MEMBERS OF ODLAA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In each bulletin we will be highlighting one or more members of the executive committee and/or an ODLAA member. In this first issue of 2015, we are starting with the current president ODLAA, Som Naidu.

Som Naidu, PhD; D. Litt. (Honoris Causa)

Email: somnaidu@gmail.com; somaiya.naidu@monash.edu.au



BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Naidu is currently an Affiliate Associate Professor at *Monash University*. He has previously served as *Associate Professor (Learning Transformations)* at Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne, *Associate Professor and Director of Teaching and Learning Quality Enhancement and Evaluation of Learning and Teaching* at Charles Sturt University, NSW Australia, and *Associate Professor of Educational Technology and Multimedia Education* at the University of Melbourne.

Dr. Naidu possesses undergraduate qualifications in *Education* from the University of Waikato in New Zealand and graduate qualifications in *Distance Education* and in *Educational Technology* from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. He has undertaken sabbaticals at *Northwestern University (USA)*, *Manchester Metropolitan University*, and the *University of London in the UK*. His publications in the areas of his expertise include several books, book chapters, and more than a hundred peer-reviewed journal articles and refereed conference papers.

Dr. Naidu is the current president of the *Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia*, executive editor of its journal *Distance Education*, and assistant editor of the journal *Interactive Learning Environments*. In May 2014 the Open University of Sri Lanka

awarded Dr. Naidu a *D.Litt. (Honoris Causa)*, in recognition of his extensive contribution to the field of *open, flexible, distance and e-learning* both regionally and internationally.

In the forthcoming bulletins we would like to highlight different ODLAA members from all over the world. Please can you send your short bio (\pm 400 words) plus a recent photo to Jenny Roberts email: buckjj@unisa.ac.za .

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