**Managing and Leading Education with Digital Technologies**

Managing and Leading Education with Digital Technologies Short Learning Programme (SLP) is offered by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and supported by the partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE), UNICEF, Vodacom and Microsoft. This course has had 166 enrolled participants by July 2016. They include Managers of District Teacher Development Centres (DTDCs) and eLearning Specialists from all nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs). This course ranks among the first university-accredited blended and technology-enabled post-graduate SLP targeted at education officials that is supported by the DBE and its partners.

The objective is to enable education officials in the DBE and provincial education departments (PEDs) to effectively harness the potential of digital technologies in support of their management and leadership roles. The selected topics for the programme are relevant in an emerging and evolving educational landscape, and are sufficiently agile to dynamically influence and enable better learning outcomes for the participants. The programme is sufficiently responsive to the needs of both developed and developing contexts and influential in shaping the future in both contexts. It makes provision for the exploration of a range of pedagogies that are appropriate for the diversity of contexts in which ICTs are used for educational purposes.

**Progress**

**Positives:** An evaluation of student views about the face to face workshop revealed that students were mostly very positive about their participation in the contact sessions. Sessions had a 99% attendance. During the sessions, students were placed in diverse groups representing various regions and had ample time to share their unique work experiences. Another positive feature worth mentioning about the contact sessions is the feedback received about the way in which theory was infused into the activities in a non-threatening and understandable way. This theory, which underpins the entire SLP, also forms the backbone of the various assignments presented to the students in the online component.

**Challenges:** The biggest technical challenge that was experienced by students involved difficulties registering on the UJ system. Even though instructions on how to register were sent prior to their arrival, only 40% successfully managed to register by deadline. Additional time was allocated on the first morning to facilitate the registration of the remaining students with varying degrees of success. Additional staff were sourced from the UJ enrolment centre to assist. Main problems encountered proved to be 3 fold:

1. Usually, between application and registration there is a 24hour delay to allow for checking credentials and whether entry requirements are met. This frustrated some students.
2. Furthermore, some of the students’ prior qualifications were granted by institutions that no longer exist and are not on the UJ accreditation list.
3. UJ Alumni students experienced the most difficulty as they needed to update their personal information and prior qualifications previously. Some were also blocked due to outstanding student debt and could not register.

**Questions**

1. What would you consider to be the main shortcomings of the SLP?
2. How would you, as a practitioner, leverage the partnerships in this collaboration to address equity?
3. To achieve equity and economies of scale, the UJ desires to expand this programme, but faces financial constraints, and the Memorandum of Understanding with the sponsors. What advice would you give to UJ on how to overcome these barriers?