Investigating the effectiveness of using MOOCs and webinars in enhancing teaching and learning in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFLA) Course in a Distance Education Environment: A case study of a Short Learning Programme.

by

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Summary

Distance education is, by its very nature, a response to the development of communications technology in the Industrial Era, coupled with the societal changes initiated by these developments (Garrison and Cleveland-Innes, 2010: 14). The current distance learning landscape is thus shaped by changing social needs brought about by the impact of advancements in technology.

This case study investigates the effectiveness of new aspects of digital learning tools as additional resources in the TEFLA course, a Short Learning Programme (SLP), offered by UNISA. These aspects of digital course delivery introduce e-learning by incorporating synchronous and asynchronous digital teaching and learning tools, in the shape of MOOCs (asynchronous learning), as well as webinars (synchronous learning). This study reviews the effectiveness of these online tools in enhancing the learning experience of TEFLA students.

The theoretical framework that informs this study is based on the *Connectivism* and *Socio-cultural* theories of knowledge acquisition.

**Key terms:** TEFLA, online learning, distance education, Short Learning Programme, MOOCs, webinars, connectivism, socio-cultural theory, online course delivery, teaching and learning, digital learning.
Declaration

I declare that *Investigating the effectiveness of using MOOCs and webinars in enhancing teaching and learning in a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFLA) Course in a Distance Education Environment: A case study of a short learning programme* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

Rona Marx (Ms)

7 December 2015
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I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my daughter for her understanding and unwavering support, as well as her wisdom and cheerful disposition, no matter what the weather.

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<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
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<td>CMC</td>
<td>Computer Mediated Communication</td>
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<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Internet Communication Technology</td>
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<td>LAD</td>
<td>Language Acquisition Device</td>
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<td>MOOC</td>
<td>Mass Open Online Course</td>
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<td>ODL</td>
<td>Open Distance Learning</td>
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<td>OER</td>
<td>Open Education Resource</td>
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<td>PoE</td>
<td>Portfolio of Evidence</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Semester</td>
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<td>SLP</td>
<td>Short Learning Programme</td>
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<td>TEFL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language</td>
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<td>TEFLA</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>TESOL</td>
<td>Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>UG</td>
<td>Universal Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNISA</td>
<td>University of South Africa</td>
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Chapter 1 -- Introduction and Overview of the Study

This study investigates the effectiveness of utilising technology as tools of learning for the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) course, a Short Learning Programme (SLP), offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA. Moreover, this study explores how certain aspects of online course delivery as teaching methodology can effectively make use of e-learning and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) by incorporating synchronous and asynchronous digital teaching and learning tools, in the shape of Open Distance Learning (ODL) sources such as a MOOC (Mass Open Online Course), an example of asynchronous learning, as well as a webinar (an example of synchronous learning). Moreover, this study assesses the effectiveness of these online tools in enhancing the learning experience of students registered for this course.

In this, the introductory chapter, an overview of the background of the study is provided by outlining the general educational landscape of distance learning and determining the current trends towards incorporating technology as teaching methodology in the distance-learning environment. Furthermore, CMC and other relevant terms and concepts are defined. This is followed by an outline of the research problem, as well as a statement of the research aims and research questions. Furthermore, the significance, as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study, are explained. Lastly, a brief outline of the subsequent chapters of this study is provided.

1.1 Background

Distance education is, by its very nature, a response to the development of communications technology in the Industrial Era, coupled with the societal changes initiated by these developments (Garrison and Cleveland-Innes, 2010: 14). Furthermore, distance education historically introduced "teaching' through text" (ibid.), thereby formalising the pedagogy of correspondence education, also known as industrial distance education. Distance education has, therefore, from the outset, utilised developments in communications technologies in order to provide an alternative avenue of
access to tertiary education through independent study (Wedemeyer, (1971) in Garrison and Cleveland-Innes, 2010: 14).

In addition, Miller (2010: 26) reminds us that distance education during the Industrial Era developed due to social change brought on by the rise of the working class; development of communications technology in the shape of mass production printing presses; more efficient postal services and the evolution of telephone services; as well as the need for educational institutions to adapt to changing social needs, that is, the greater demand for education created by urbanisation and a rising labour force.

The current distance learning landscape is shaped, once again, by changing social needs, particularly as far as it is reflective of the impact of advancements in technology. These advancements include the developments in computer hardware and software products, as well as the global evolution of the internet as both a source of information and a communication tool. According to Garrison and Cleveland-Innes (2010: 18-19), distance learning has entered into a post-industrialist era which utilises the development in Internet technologies in order to offer synchronous and asynchronous teaching opportunities on an individual level, as well as in group teaching situations.

The development in communications technology has brought about and is coupled with a significant change in the social needs of students. Cowan in Howard and McGrath (1993: 14-15) explains that distance learning has evolved, through the advances in technology, to 'open learning', which he takes "to imply situations in which learners have the opportunity to exercise choice between valid and significant options that affect their learning, in respect of pace, content, method or standards; or where access to learning, through the specification of prerequisite coverage or qualification, is unrestricted or relatively 'open'." Withal, Carver (in Howard and McGrath, 1993: 194) is of the opinion that "distance education can be seen as no longer a marginal activity offering second-chance and third-age courses but as, at its best, a paradigm case of good practice, at the leading edge of educational development." Consequently, distance education or 'open'
learning has developed due to, and is shaped by, the amelioration of technology, which has precipitated profound changes in the social and educational needs of students.

It is therefore evident that, with the arrival of the digital era, the post-industrial development of technology has led to a transformation of students' social needs and, hence, it is no longer a question of whether a distance learning institution like UNISA (the University of South Africa) should embrace and utilise the concept of e-learning or Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), but rather how. However, as shall be explained below, the use of technology in distance-education should aim to enhance the learning experience for students and should not be utilised merely for its own sake.

The emergence of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) in the current context of technological advancements offers a variety of tools for delivery and distribution, as well as interactive learning, in the context of the distance learning environment. CMC is defined as "a process in which human data interaction occurs through one or more networked telecommunication systems. A CMC interaction occurs through various types of networking technology and software..." (Janssen, 2010-2014). Moreover, Janssen explains that synchronous methods of communication means that all the participants in the session are online at the same time, and in real-time. On the other hand, asynchronous communication means that messages and responses are subject to time constraints and all participants may not be online at the same time, for example e-mail communication (Janssen, 2010-2014).

Zhao (2003: 8) points out that the umbrella term 'technology' represents a wide array of tools and tools that can be used in numerous ways in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). In addition, the purpose of the digital tools should not be confused with its potential and functionality (Cf. White, 2003; Istifci & Kaya, 2011). Therefore, as much as digital tools of pedagogical delivery are vast in their potential and
accessibility, the use of these technologies in Open Distance Learning (ODL) contexts should focus on their effectiveness in achieving learning outcomes in the context of language learning, specifically.

Perraton (1993: 32) postulates that, "The pedagogical challenge for distance educators [of language teachers] is to resolve the dilemma between providing enough support to students to motivate, encourage and help them but not so much that they rely solely on what has been provided." Furthermore, Leach (1993: 37) reminds us that "The constraints of the distance learning model are in fact imposing a greater need for good practice... the language teacher is more focused on process than the average teacher of the average subject, and thus has more opportunity to develop good awareness of and contribution to the learning process".

In addition, Jennings (1993: 104) states that the incorporation of digital technology enables student teachers to overcome time and space constraints, which are significant obstacles to be negated in distance learning. Furthermore, such technologies can encourage the development of individual language skills, as well as the acquisition of pedagogical methodologies that are essential in the field of effective language teaching. In other words, the use of technology should aim to provide the service that is inherent to the distance-learning landscape, that is, to provide access to education in which the limitations of time and space are negated. For language teacher-students, the use of technology could and should further provide structures that offer the opportunity to acquire and hone pedagogical teaching techniques that are essential to language teaching.

Developments in technology have led distance learning institutions to evolve through various generational models of delivery (White, 2003: 13) and UNISA may currently be regarded as utilising third generation course models in the delivery of its course offerings. (A more detailed discussion regarding generational models of delivery follows in Chapter 2). However, White (2003: 15) also emphasises that the use of technology for delivery and distribution purposes should be complemented with its use for
interactive exchange between students and teachers, and among students themselves.

There is clearly a need, therefore, to investigate how effectively CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) in the form of online learning can be used as a means of teaching that promotes a learner-centred approach, rather than a teacher-centred approach, in language teaching in a distance education environment. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the use of technology should be measured in terms of the extent to which students find these technologies to be an enhancement of the course offering as an added value to their learning process.

Hence, this discussion now turns its focus towards a formulation of the research problem.

1.2 The research problem

With the emergence of the "digital age", which is taken here to refer to the current global environment in which most information is in a digital format (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2014), distance education institutions are challenged with a myriad of models and theories around the pedagogy and methodology of the delivery of course content via CMC (Computer Mediated Communication). According to White (2003: 9) any communication that takes place through a computer-based medium can be considered as computer-mediated communication. This includes e-mails, websites, chat rooms, discussion forums, webinars, instant messaging portals, and any similar forms of communication that happen through the use of computers. Furthermore, digital tools of learning can be used as synonymous with online learning and thus constitute "a range of practices based on the Internet that provides synchronous and asynchronous communication in a personal and group environment." (Garrison and Cleveland-Innes, 2010: 19). For the purpose of this study, therefore, CMC refers to any communication that happens via the medium of computers.

Kanuka and Brooks (2010: 69-85) outline the difficulties of applying a post-Fordist online learning approach to distance education, with the aim to
facilitate flexible and quality delivery of learning opportunities to a mass audience\(^1\). Kanuka and Brooks (2010: 69-85) further emphasise the need to balance technologically mediated open and distance learning with the process of learning which is, in essence, the aim of learning programmes. Moreover, Macdonald (2008: 1) proposes that changes in social constructs have led to course developers utilising online media for teaching and learning. She warns, however, that good practice demands a closer look at course learning objectives, as well as students' needs (2008: 2-3).

In addition, White (2003: 2) points out that the use of technologies has the potential to transform the language teaching and learning experience in the distance learning context, but that learners' needs and the overall context of delivery should not be side-lined in a scramble toward technology as a delivery model for its own sake. Furthermore, Istifci and Kaya (2011) remind us that the use of online learning in the language learning context may pose challenges for students who are not fluent in the target language. It should be noted here that many teachers of English as a Foreign Language are not native speakers of the language themselves and are often still in the process of honing their own proficiency in the target language. Moreover, the use of technology in the learning process also requires certain levels of digital literacy in order to negotiate the learning spaces. These aspects are addressed in more detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

The research problem, then, is to assess and analyse the effectiveness of online resources (such as a subject-relevant MOOC and a webinar) as learning tools offering complementary resources for EFL (English Foreign Language) teacher trainees; and to establish whether such online-learning tools can inform the effective facilitation of language teacher learning in an Open Distance Learning context.

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\(^1\) The term *post-Fordist* refers to the current governing socio-economic framework of production and consumption in the industrialised world since the late 20\(^{th}\) Century. It refers specifically to the move away from mass production, as introduced to the world by Henry Ford, towards a more specialised system of production and delivery of services and goods for specific purposes and by using flexible strategies of manufacturing (Dictionary.com, LLC, 2015).
1.3 Research Aims

In light of the challenges posed by the world trend toward online learning, this research investigates the effectiveness of online tools in enhancing language teaching and learning in an ODL (Open Distance Learning) context and suggests a model for the effective use of such tools in enhancing language teaching and learning in an ODL context.

Taking the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) programme, offered at UNISA, an ODL (Open Distance Learning) university, as a case study, the research sub-aims are:

1. to investigate the effectiveness of a subject-specific MOOC as an online resource for facilitating students' learning;
2. to explore the effectiveness of a webinar as an online tool for facilitating students' learning; and also
3. to suggest guidelines that can inform the effective use of MOOCs and webinars as online resources to enhance EFL teacher-training in Distance Learning contexts.

1.4 Research Questions

Taking the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) programme, offered at UNISA, an ODL (Open Distance Learning) university, as a case study, this work investigates the following research questions:

1. How effective are MOOCs, as online additional resources for enhancing EFL teaching and learning?
2. How effective are webinars, as online tools for enhancing EFL teacher-training?
3. What guidelines can inform the effective use of online tools to enhance EFL teacher-training in an Open Distance Learning context?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Although it may be accepted that emerging technologies have changed the landscape of distance learning in profound ways, Wang, Calandra and Li
(2010: 286) point out that very little research has emerged on the usefulness and effectiveness of utilising digital tools of learning in the field of English foreign-language learning and teaching.

Although the focus group of this study is very small (please refer to Chapter 3 for Research Methodology), the conclusions reached in this case study may offer valuable insights into course design and delivery for TEFLA educators at distance learning institutions. Furthermore, current and prospective TEFLA students could benefit from a well-designed delivery model of instruction – one that could enhance their learning experience and encourage development of their digital literacy skills; their ability to form connections of knowledge for lifelong learning strategies; as well as their personal development and ongoing professional development through advancing the skill of constructing knowledge in the context of sociocultural aspects present in their particular field of study. The study aims to confirm George Veletsianos' (2010: 317-318) observation that

Whether as a result of technological advancements, a changing mindset, or a combination of the two, distance learning educators, researchers, and practitioners are collectively focusing their attention around a recurring theme. Specifically, they are seeking approaches grounded upon social, authentic, and community-based learning experiences, where presence, communication, interaction, and collaboration are valued. In this context, emerging technologies are used to enhance education, and good practice and pedagogy are used to appropriate the emerging technologies available.

Thus, it is expected that the use of online tools to enhance teaching will remain an ongoing process that will constantly seek authentic social learning encounters where interactive communication strives to enhance students' learning processes. Finally, the findings of this study may prove to be useful in the pedagogical design of other online language teaching and learning courses in an open distance learning environment.
1.6. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

1.6.1. Limitations

The findings of this study cannot be generalised. The population and sample are specific to the context of a distance learning institution in South Africa and should, therefore, be considered in that context. Furthermore, this study relates specifically to the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre as a Short Learning Programme at UNISA, a distance learning institution. The findings of this study could, at best, be used as a guideline for remodelling the delivery of a language teaching and learning programme by utilising digital tools in a distance learning context. It can also serve as a basis for further studies.

1.6.2. Delimitations

The participants in this study are students registered for the TEFLA SLP offered by the Povey Centre at UNISA during Semester 2 of 2014 and Semester 1 of 2015. The students are not geographically grouped, as they reside in various locations around the world (but mostly in South Africa), as UNISA is an ODL institution available to students globally. Thus, the common denominating factor among participants is that they are taking an Open Distance Learning short course at UNISA in order to become teachers of English as a Foreign Language to Adults.

1.7. Chapter outline

According to Veletsianos (2010: ix) "Emerging technologies have been heralded as providing the opportunities and affordances to transform education, learning, and teaching." This study explores how these emerging technologies may be utilised as digital resources and tools in the pedagogical methodology of English Foreign Language teacher-training in a distance education environment and thus Chapter 1 has provided an introduction, as well as an overview of the study, by briefly considering the current landscape of distance learning, as well as the pedagogical potentialities offered by digital web-based tools towards enhancing the learning experience for students enrolled in an EFL teacher-training
programme. Withal, this chapter has outlined the research problem, research aims, as well as the research questions addressed in this study.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework of the study by considering the socio-cultural and connectivist theories of learning in an educational environment which is increasingly embracing digital tools of course delivery and learning spaces. Furthermore, the relevant literature on English foreign-language learning and teaching is reviewed, with a look at some of the main theories that have shaped this discipline. Moreover, this chapter explores some of the models related to the training of foreign language teachers in a distance-learning context, as well as models relevant to the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills. This chapter also peruses the relevant models of delivery of language teacher-training programmes in a distance education environment and it defines the concepts of synchronous and asynchronous teaching. The use of CMC, particularly in the context of English foreign-language learning and teacher-training in an open distance learning context, is explored here, including the definitions of, as well as the research on the usefulness of, MOOCs and webinars as computer mediated communication tools. Finally, this chapter then outlines the SLPs offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, in particular the TEFLA programme. A closer look is taken at the content and delivery of the TEFLA programme, including an outline of the relevant study guides.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methodology employed in this case study. Reasons are provided for choosing a case study as a qualitative method of conducting research and the population and sampling of the research participants are identified. Furthermore, the data collection and data analysis methodology are outlined in this chapter, and the reliability and validity of the research established. Finally, particulars of the ethical clearance obtained from the College of Human Sciences at UNISA are provided in this chapter.

Chapter 4 describes, discusses and analyses the findings of this case study. The discussion is informed by the research questions, as formulated earlier
in Chapter 1, and commences with the findings on the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional sources of knowledge in the TEFLA SLP. The effectiveness of MOOCs is addressed first, by analysing students' reflections in their final assessments, as well as the co-ordinator's reports for the two semesters under review. Subsequently, the effectiveness of the webinars is analysed by considering students' responses to questionnaires pertaining to the webinars, and again by considering the co-ordinator's reports for the two semesters in question. The overall effectiveness of the MOOCs and webinars is then ascertained in their respective sections, in the form of summaries of the findings.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter of this study, and thus offers a synthesis of the final deductions and consequent recommendations based on the research aims of the case study. Deductions are offered regarding the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional resources for the TEFLA course at Unisa, by considering each of the resources separately. The benefits and weaknesses are discussed under each resource, whereupon guidelines and recommendations are postulated. The recommendations include guidelines to inform the pedagogical framework of an online language teacher-training Short Learning Programme. A conclusion finalises the chapter, as well as the study as a whole.
Chapter 2 -- Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of the study by considering the socio-cultural and connectivist theories of learning in an educational environment which is increasingly embracing digital tools of course delivery and learning spaces. Furthermore, this chapter reviews the relevant literature on English foreign-language learning and teaching, with a look at some of the main theories that have shaped this discipline. Moreover, this chapter explores some of the models related to the training of foreign language teachers in a distance-learning context, as well as models relevant to the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills.

This chapter also peruses the relevant models of delivery of language teacher-training programmes in a distance education environment and it defines the concepts of synchronous and asynchronous-teaching. Next, the use of CMC, particularly in the context of English foreign-language learning and teacher-training in an open distance learning context, is explored, including the definitions of, as well as the research on the usefulness of MOOCs and webinars as computer mediated communication tools.

This chapter then outlines The SLPs offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, in particular the TEFLA programme. A closer examination of the content and delivery of the TEFLA programme, including an outline of the relevant study guides is also offered.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

Bell (1999: 90-91) explains that the theoretical framework of a research study is the background against which the researcher explains the facts and illustrates the link between the facts and the findings. Generally, the
Theoretical framework informs the researcher's analysis of the findings and it guides the researcher's interpretation of the findings during their research.

In view of the intention to incorporate and establish the effectiveness of CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) and online learning tools in the TEFLA short learning programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, this study conducts its investigation against the backdrop of two current pedagogical theories of learning, namely Connectivism and Socio-cultural Theories, as far as they relate to digital tools of EFL teacher-training in a distance education context.

These two theories are chosen for this study, as they are particularly relevant to the synergy created by innovations in technology and the social need constructs of students in the context of the distance learning environment. Bearing in mind the definition of CMC as mentioned in Chapter 1, the Connectivism and Socio-cultural Theories encompass the ways in which learner interaction takes place through the media of networking technologies.

2.2.1. Socio-cultural Theory

The first theory that aids a formulation of a feasible strategy when incorporating online learning tools in a distance education environment is the Socio-cultural Theory. Based on the work of Russian psychologist L. S. Vygotsky and his colleagues (1978), this theory proposes that the metacognitive functioning involved in learning is a "mediated process" that involves the organisation of cultural artefacts, activities and concepts (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007:197). Lantolf and Thorne (2007: 197-198) further postulate that this theory proposes that, "while human neurobiology is a necessary condition for higher order thinking, the most important forms of human cognitive activity develop through interaction within these social and material environments." In other words, one may argue that learners in a distance learning environment will utilise digital learning tools as a social construct that act as cultural artefacts for social interaction that may lead to the cognitive acquisition of knowledge. It is evident that the socio-cultural theory and the theory of connectivism (please see discussion below) overlap
in many ways, each offering a different explanation of how connections to knowledge are utilised by students in the process of learning.

Zygouris-Coe (in Hartshorne, Heafner and Petty (eds.) 2013:148) affirms that "Cognitive science tells us that transference of knowledge from teacher to learner cannot happen. Learning is a complex, active and socially constructed process". (Italics mine.) Thus, learning cannot happen in isolation, nor can knowledge be transferred from teacher to learner by osmosis. Instead, learning happens through many layers of experience within the context of social interaction.

Studies conducted by White (2003: 143) reveal that the context of language learning in a distance education environment "contributes to the shaping of learners' beliefs and knowledge, and that metacognitive experiences are a significant point of growth for learners." In addition, McLaughlin (1987: 133-153) refers to second-language learning as the acquisition of a complex cognitive skill that requires social knowledge of the constructs of meaning of the target language. In other words, it may be argued that digital tools of learning provide students with the opportunities to utilise their metacognitive skills through the use of English as the medium of instruction. In addition, these digital learning spaces can encourage students to utilise the metacognitive skills required in second-language learning and teaching, steeped in socio-cultural experiences of the application of English in a digital, Open Education context.

Moreover, Swan (in Cleveland-Innes and Garrison, 2010: 108-129) proposes that online learning provides new opportunities for learner-centred pedagogies that offer tools for socio-cultural interaction through collaborative learning that promotes enquiry, interaction and critical thinking in a higher education context. Furthermore, she reminds us that emerging technologies have the particular function of facilitating new kinds of learning experiences for students in a distance education environment. Ice (in Cleveland-Innes and Garrison, 2010: 143) affirms that "From a
pedagogical perspective there is also evidence that the ability to add and manipulate media easily is associated with significant cognitive gains."

Once again, though, we are reminded by Cleveland-Innes and Garrison (2010: 257) that the quality of the teaching and learning transaction should always take preference over the use of technology for its own sake in distance education. Furthermore, Zygouris-Coe (in Hartshorne, Heafner and Petty, 2013: 151) points out that learners possess different skills-levels in negotiating knowledge acquisition in an online environment. Her view coalesces with the claims in the previous section regarding digital literacy and remaining cognisant of students' differing abilities and skills levels in the milieu of developments in technology as tools for learning.

The challenge for learners in the online learning distance education environment include digital literacy skills, meaningful interaction skills, as well as the ability to actively participate in socio-cultural constructs inherent in the digital learning environment. Rodríguez Illera (in Brown and Davis (eds.), 2004: 55) offers an interesting perspective on digital literacy as an essential aspect imbedded in the 'culture' of multimedia learning in the digital world. He poses the question "how should multimedia elements be integrated into the communicative space of digital communities, or into forms of individual help?" Furthermore, he is of the view that educational institutions need to decide whether to utilise multimedia for educational communication purposes, or not. He questions whether multimedia is necessarily conducive to learning and whether the overuse of multimedia in learning can lead to 'cognitive dispersion' due to information overload. In this context, cognitive dispersion could also refer to the level of a learner's digital literacy and the extent to which learners can process information offered through the use of multimedia.

One should remain au courant, therefore, that the use of digital tools in the learning space may be socio-culturally more challenging for some students than for others, just as it would be more challenging for some students to negotiate connections to knowledge, than for other students (as described in
the theory of connectivism). But then, this aspect of utilising social constructs to acquire learning is not unique to the digital sphere of learning and it can be regarded as true for all types of learning, as learning skills and aptitudes for learning differ from one student to the next. That is, some students are socio-culturally (and connectively) more adapt at negotiating any learning space, digital or otherwise, than other students. Bonk and Cunningham (in Bonk and King (eds.), 1998: 25-50) support this claim by reminding us that learning theories cannot be isolated from questions such as cognitive ability, as well as external input. In fact, Vygotskian psychology emphasises the view that individual cognitive functioning operates within contexts such as sociology, culture, educational institutions and history.

Furthermore, Starkey (2012: 46) affirms that "It is the ability to have the knowledge to be able to apply concepts to the world in which they [students] live that prepares them to actively participate in the society in which they live." Ergo, learning depends on any individual learner's capacity to negotiate meaning within any social learning environment.

It is of particular interest that students who register for the TEFLA programme are mostly speakers of English as an additional language themselves. (This aspect will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.) McLaughlin (1987: 133) points out that second language learning is a complex cognitive skill. Therefore, the use of digital tools for pedagogical delivery should be balanced with the quality of the content offered in order for the learning transaction to be successfully negotiated by the learner in the socio-cultural environment where the learning takes place. That is, students who are speakers of English as an additional language can benefit significantly from quality content offered by means of digital tools that encourage them to negotiate meaning in English. White (2003: 54) explains that "CMC facilitates language learning by giving students more time to reflect on their fellow students' contributions and to develop and refine their own responses; this may lead to greater precision and sophistication of expression..." The social constructs of interaction in
learning, therefore, can be linked to the socio-cultural theory in that students actively navigate the socio-cultural aspects of the course, as well as the English language, in the learning process.

Jennings (1993: 105) further reminds us that providing opportunities for interactivity in language teaching courses is essential for the fruitful attaining of language skills, as well as the pedagogical principles of teaching those skills. His reason for advocating an abundance of opportunities for interactivity in language teaching courses is due to the fact that communication skills are essential, not only as the means of teaching, but also as its final outcome. Furthermore, he is of the view that the opportunities for social interactivity are often lacking in the distance learning environment due to the limitations of time and place that are intrinsic to the distance education milieu. He advocates that "For the delivery of courses whose primary aim is to develop communication skills so that successful students can teach communication through language, the absence of interactivity is a severe limitation... the full richness of a distance-learning experience can only be achieved if some significant level of social interactivity is possible."

One may surmise here that socio-cultural contexts do not necessarily require personal interaction in order for learners to form part of such a context. For example, learners and researchers form part of certain socio-cultural learning groups, in that they observe and study each other's work and learn from the discourse surrounding their specific area of study, even though they might never directly interact with or personally meet such peers.

It may be argued that the utilisation of MOOCs and webinars should provide such opportunities for social interactivity and should, at least in part, compensate for the typically isolating aspects of the distance learning environment. Therefore, an assessment of the effectiveness of these digital tools of learning will take into account whether this is the case.
It is evident that the socio-cultural theory shares some elements with the theory of constructivism (as discussed in 2.2.2.), particularly as far as it regards learning as a process shaped against the background of social interaction. However, constructivism is more concerned with the way learning happens within each individual learner as part of social groups and through social interactions and its application remains vague (CI 484 learning Technologies Wikispaces, 2015). In contrast, the socio-cultural theory is more specific insofar as it elucidates how learning takes place within certain socio-cultural environments that require the learner to navigate learning through the use of cultural artefacts as systems of information. Importantly language, the acquisition of it, as well as imparting the skills required by it, is one of these artefacts essential to learning within a socio-cultural context (Wells, 2004: 8). According to Wells (ibid.) the culture itself acts as a system of information and furthermore, the context within which meaning is exchanged through language is a system in itself, which must be negotiated in order to create and receive meaning.

The socio-cultural theory is therefore useful, not only in describing how socio-cultural interaction is essential to the learning process of language teachers in a distance-education environment, but it also aids us in constructing and utilising opportunities for social interaction between students and tutors, as well as among students themselves. Therefore, in view of the research aims of this study, the effectiveness of digital learning tools as additional learning spaces can be assessed according to the opportunities that it provides for socio-cultural interaction. The effectiveness of these digital learning tools can also be assessed according to their value as social artefacts that promote understanding and the acquisition of knowledge as a system of information in itself.

2.2.2. Connectivism

In January 2005, George Siemens (2005: 3-10) wrote an article that was published in the International Journal of Instructional Technology and
Distance Learning (ITDL) entitled Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age. In this article, Siemens challenged the theories that have informed learning in educational environments up to that time, namely behaviourism, constructivism and cognitivism.

Behaviourism refers to theories that informed pedagogical methodologies employed in education predominantly in the latter part of the 20th Century. Its foundation is the notion that learning requires the acquisition of new behaviours or changes in behaviour in response to stimuli (Anderson and Dron, 2010: 80-97). Constructivism, according to these authors (ibid.), "acknowledges the social nature of knowledge and of its creation in the minds of individual learners. Teachers do not merely transmit knowledge to be passively consumed by learners; rather, each learner constructs means by which new knowledge is both created and integrated with existing knowledge". Constructivism also considers the influence of social structures in the acquisition of learning and, thus, it ties in with the socio-cultural theory, which is discussed in 2.2.2 below. Lastly, cognitivism is informed by the study of how learners' minds are utilised in obtaining, processing and storing of information (Stavredes, 2011). As opposed to behaviourism, the theory of cognitivism postulates that the workings of the mind are more relevant to learning than the shaping and changing of behaviours in response to stimuli. Cognitivists regard the human mind as similar to a computer processor in that it obtains, processes and stores information during the learning process (CI 484 Learning Technologies Wikispaces, 2015).

Siemens' motivation for challenging the relevance of these theories is due to the fact that they do not fully encompass and explain the way learning takes place in the contemporary educational environment that has been shaped and affected by the emergence of technological advances (Siemens, 2005: 3-10). Siemens' article and subsequent writings have sparked much interest among scholars and his work has since been adopted by many as a useful theory for explaining and describing how learning takes place in the digital age. Most notably, Siemens' work is supported by Stephen Downes in

According to Siemens' theory (2005: 3-10) connectivism refers to the capacity of learners in a digital world to form connections between sources of knowledge in order to create useful patterns of information for learning to take place in our knowledge-based economy. In his article, Siemens (ibid.) proceeds to postulate that:

Learning (defined as actionable knowledge) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organization or a database), is focused on connecting specialized information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing.

Connectivism is driven by the understanding that decisions are based on rapidly altering foundations. New information is continually being acquired. The ability to draw distinctions between important and unimportant information is vital. The ability to recognize when new information alters the landscape based on decisions made yesterday is also critical.

Therefore, connectivism refers to the individual learner's ability to assess and integrate information in order to construct knowledge, as part of the learning process. It may be argued that digital tools of learning provide these "specialized information sets" for learners, thereby encouraging students to develop the skill of connecting themselves to sources of knowledge and constantly re-assessing their connections in order to ensure that they are aligned with the sources of knowledge as they change and shift. In particular, one may argue that the utilisation of MOOCs and webinars as learning tools encompasses such assessment and integration on the part of the learner in order to access, construct and integrate knowledge as part of the learning process.

Siemens' work should, therefore, be regarded as building on the foundations of the learning theories that precede it. That is, the theories of behaviourism, constructivism and cognitivism are still of value when considering how learning takes place in students. However, Siemens' theory progresses from our understanding of the learning process to inform educators in the digital age of how knowledge is constructed by learners.
Veletsianos (2010: 34) further describes connectivism as knowledge acquired by learning environments being created by learners through the access to digital learning tools. He proposes that learners create useful and personalised knowledge through creating connections between sources of knowledge in their network. Thus, connectivism is the awareness of "paths to knowledge" that is required for learning to take place.

Cornu (in Brown and Davis, 2004: 40-45) considers the way in which advancements in technology have orchestrated profound changes in the way that information is accessed throughout society and, in particular, in education. He refers to a "collective intelligence for teachers and learners" in "a networked society" where learners are required to form connections to information. Instead of the traditional linear, pyramidal or hierarchical structures of information in the form of printed learning material, technology (he explains) consists of numerous sets of connected points or "nodes". These linked 'nodes' create intricate non-linear structures or networks that have particular characteristics of which, most pertinently, are the interrelated links between sources of information and people. There is an infinite possibility of the links that can exist between the users of the information, as well as the users and the information and, in addition, the sources of information itself. Furthermore, there are an infinite number of possibilities of sub-networks that can also exist within this structure of links. In contrast to these sub-networks of information and people, Cornu suggests that a hierarchical structure consists of one predetermined and linear path to information and this path is usually controlled by the people at the top of the hierarchical structure and 'fed down' to the receivers of the information at the bottom of the hierarchical structure.

Therefore, these networks created by technology of information and people demand and create a myriad of opportunities to access knowledge. It is thus through this concept of connectivism that we can describe the way in which learners develop pathways to information and knowledge required in their studies in this, the digital age. This connectivism may be regarded as particularly relevant to the landscape of distance learning, due to the amorphous nature of students’ personal learning environments. Starkey (2012: 26) informs us that "George Siemens developed 'connectivism' as a
learning theory for the digital era. Connectivism aims to provide a theory that considers how people, organisations and technology can collaboratively construct knowledge." In particular, Siemens (2005: 3-10) posits that the elements involved in the learning process are vague and not always within the control of the student. Thus useful knowledge can exist outside of the individual within an institution or collection of information; it aims to connect individuals and organisations with sets of information and these connections to knowledge are more valuable to learners that their existing knowledge.

Since the distance-learning environment may be considered as nebulous due to its geographically remote nature, this aspect of the theory of connectivism seems to be singularly applicable in its context. Furthermore, Anderson and Dron (2012) pinpoint the elements of the Connectivism Theory that are particularly relevant to the distance-learning landscape, namely "distributed cognition; collective intelligence distributed across a network; a multiplicity of tools, methods and goals; an emphasis on an individual and the individual’s connections; an assumption of ubiquitous social connection; a decentralization of teaching roles; a focus on creation in a social context as an active constituent of learning."

These elements can be explored and explained as follows:

1. Distributed cognition refers to cognitive processes that "are involved in memory, decision making, inference, reasoning, learning, and so on" (Hutchins, 2000: 1). Moreover, Hutchins (2000: 1-2) explains that distributed cognition expands on other theories related to cognition in that it postulates that cognitive processes could be shared among the individuals belonging to a social group; that cognitive processes could be distributed in the way that it purports that the functioning of the cognitive system necessitates an interaction between internal and external (inherent or environmental) compositions, and in the way that processes may be distributed over a period of time in such a way that the outcomes of earlier events can transform the constructs of later events.

2. Collective intelligence distributed across a network ties in with distributed cognition in that it points to knowledge that is constructed through connections with members of social or educational groups in which
"virtual communities shape innovative pedagogies to create alternative instructional paradigms" (Dede, 1996: 4).

3. A multiplicity of tools, methods and goals refer to the inherent nature of the distance-learning environment, in that it incorporates different tools and methods of delivering education for a number of varied goals and reasons (Howell, Williams and Lindsay, 2003).

4. An emphasis on an individual and the individual’s connections may be regarded as the focus of learning in a distance learning environment on the individual learner and the learner's connections to sources of knowledge (Howell, Williams and Lindsay, 2003).

5. An assumption of ubiquitous social connection refers to the presumption that learners in a digital environment, shaped by access to online connections, are members of social groups that share similar interests and, therefore, access to knowledge (Howell, Williams and Lindsay, 2003).

6. A decentralization of teaching roles refers to the shift to a learner-centred approach to teaching, where learners are required to take more responsibility for their learning as opposed to the traditional "information download" from lecturers in a one-sided manner (Howell, Williams and Lindsay, 2003).

7. A focus on creation in a social context as an active constituent of learning is explained by Grabinger and Dunlap (1995: 5) as learning methodologies "that engage students in a continuous collaborative process of building and reshaping understanding as a natural consequence of their experiences and interactions within learning environments that authentically reflect the world around them".

These elements, as highlighted by Anderson and Dron (2012), therefore describe a learning landscape in a digital environment that is clearly elucidated by the theory of connectivism and hence, this theory can be regarded as pertinently applicable to digital tools of learning in an open distance-learning landscape.

From this general understanding of the Connectivism Theory, this theoretical framework now turns its focus towards a reflection of the relevance of connectivism to the language teaching and learning domain. In the first instance, Starkey (2012: 34) points out that, in the digital age, it has
become the role of teachers to create and facilitate learning through providing connections that enable collaborative learning in students. In particular, Veselá (2013) proposes that the intrinsic essence of foreign language learning involves extracting order out of disorder and the necessity to construct systems of knowledge through self-reliance, as well as a reliance on connections to knowledge, and an innate ability to order and classify rules and deciding on the specific purposes motivating the learning of a foreign language. In Veselá’s view (2013), therefore, the theory of connectivism is particularly applicable to foreign language learning in a digital environment, as the principles of foreign language learning are extended to the technological milieu of learning. Moreover, White (2003: 51) specifically highlights the usefulness of CMC in the context of connectivism as a process of learning and acquiring knowledge in the context of language learning through distance education. She claims that, through the use of CMC, "students are offered the opportunity to develop their own learning opportunities" in a digital sphere, especially pertaining to language learning in a distance education environment. She further states that the use of technology in the process of learning has made it possible for students to collaborate in their own constructs of knowledge parallel to the more rigid sources of information and knowledge offered by pre-written study material. White (ibid.) further suggests that, through the use of technology and CMC, students are able to reflect on their learning and also transcend the feelings of isolation that can be caused by language learning at a distance. In her view, students can therefore consider themselves to be part of a community of learners who share the knowledge-building aspects of education. Thus, the introduction of MOOCs and webinars create such collaborative learning opportunities, and these tools can also be regarded as complementary to the prepared materials usually offered to students as part of a distance learning programme. Furthermore, McLaughlin (1987: 110) describes second-language acquisition as part of a process of acculturation in the target language and that the level of success of acquiring the target language can be determined by the degree to which learners succeed in adapting socially and
psychologically to the target language. Since the learning in a digital space requires the connection of sources of knowledge through the use of English, it may be argued that this process can aid acculturation in English as a foreign language. Thus, students who are learning to be teachers of English as a foreign language, can use this process of acculturation to enhance their own teaching techniques, as well as their understanding of the challenges posed to English foreign language learners in a digital environment.

In addition, White (2003: 55) asserts the importance of participation and interaction in the distance language learning environment, pointing out that "CMC has made it possible for language learners to integrate independent learning experiences with opportunities for interaction and collaboration" (ibid.). White's view therefore ties in with the explanations offered by the theory of connectivism in the context of language-teacher learning in a distance learning environment.

It is evident, therefore, that digital tools such as MOOCs and webinars provide learners with the opportunity to actively engage with their own learning experience and their acquisition of knowledge in the language learning context of a distance education environment. Therefore, the theory of connectivism is profoundly relevant as a theoretical background against which the effectiveness of a MOOC and a webinar in an ODL TEFL teacher-training course can be assessed.

However, Anderson and Dron (2012) point out that technology and pedagogy should complement each other in the learning experience in order for the learning experience to be of value. They remind us that "Together, technology and pedagogy reveal and develop our human creativity and responsiveness and allow us to learn effectively and enjoyably."

In order for this cohesion to take place at all and in order for learners to access the pedagogy offered by technology, certain skills are essential; skills that may be termed as digital literacy. White (2003:29) reminds us that students, who are expected to form connections in a digital environment, should possess a certain level of computer literacy. One should remain cognisant, therefore, of the skills required in navigating knowledge offered on digital tools.
The necessity of digital literacy in a distance learning environment that embraces technology and the use of CMC precipitates a brief examination of criticism of the theory of connectivism. Kop and Hill (2008) accede that Siemens’ and Downes’ connectivist theorising have received much attention and support in the 'blogosphere' as they term it, but they question whether this theory is still relevant in the ever-expanding landscape of digital learning environments. Kop and Hill (ibid.) further pose the question of whether new theories of learning in the environment of rapidly growing technological advancements are called for to inform educational pedagogy. These authors postulate that "Connectivism focuses mainly on cognitive development, and as such does not concentrate on explaining how connections to networks may be interpreted in relation to physical maturation or the changes that occur over time via a person’s exposure to, and interaction, with the social world. This is particularly the case where explaining behavioural performance and moral development in specific contexts is concerned". One may add that the connectivist theory does not entirely explore limitations in individual students, insofar as cognitive competency and digital literacy is concerned.

Kop and Hill (2008: 4) further expound that learning institutions are struggling to design and offer study programmes that suit the needs of their students in a learning environment that has to cope with digital technologies that evolve almost daily.

Moreover, Siemens himself (2006b: 6) highlights other factors that may inform the development of a new learning theory, such as teaching methodologies, curriculum design methodologies, as well as critical thinking and strategizing in education. Thus, Siemens reiterates the fact that there are a multitude of changeable elements involved in the environment surrounding the postulation of a new theory.

However, Kop and Hill (2008: 9) conclude that the connectivist theory can be applied to the formulation of pedagogical teaching designs as it remains relevant at the level of curriculum design because people do learn by
forming connections to sources of knowledge in a digital landscape even though, and perhaps because, they constantly adapt to the technological changes in the modern learning environment.

In addition, Pettenati and Cigognini (2007: 42) argue that "'connectivism' (social networking applied to learning and knowledge contexts) can lead to a reconceptualization of learning in which formal, non-formal and informal learning can be integrated as to build a potentially lifelong learning activities to be experienced in 'personal learning environments'" (sic).

Therefore, considering that this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of online tools in enhancing language teaching and learning in an ODL context, as well as to suggest a model for the effective use of such tools in enhancing language teaching and learning in an ODL context, it is evident that the theory of connectivism can be helpful in formulating an English Foreign Language teacher-training model of online learning in a distance education environment. However, it is important to remain cognisant of the challenges posed by digital tools of knowledge delivery.

Consequently, one may conclude that both these theories (connectivism and socio-culturalism) offer valuable insights into the advantageous nature of digital learning tools as a means of teaching the teachers in the distance education language learning environment, but that due care should be taken in utilising online learning as a tool for enhancing the learning experience. The focus, therefore, should be on a learner-centred approach to the negotiation and acquisition of knowledge as a metacognitive process constructed through the use of socio-cultural aspects and systems of learning, in tandem with the construction of interlinked sources of learning through the principle of connectivism.

In light of the research aims of this study, therefore, these two theories help to assess the effectiveness of suitable digital tools, that is, digital aspects of CMC (as defined in the Introduction), in an EFL teaching programme in an ODL context. The assumption, then, is that digital tools of delivery in
pedagogical methodology should focus on being learner-centred in its approach to the negotiation and acquisition of knowledge as a metacognitive process constructed through the use of socio-cultural aspects of learning. In addition, digital tools of learning should also provide opportunities for the construction of interlinked sources of learning through the principle of connectivism. Therefore, this study assesses the following tools of online learning incorporated into the TEFLA programme, in order to serve as a case study to review its effectiveness:

1. A free Mass Open Online Course (MOOC), specific to the subject of TEFLA; and
2. A webinar as a synchronous teaching space, on a topic of specific relevance to the TEFLA students in an EFL teaching programme in an Open Distance Learning context.

2.3. Literature review

This section reviews literature that informs various theories and models for language learning and teacher training. This literature review also considers theories and models relevant to the use of technology in teaching and learning in the distance learning environment. Furthermore, definitions of synchronous- and asynchronous interaction in distance learning contexts are outlined, and literature is reviewed on various digital tools of learning in distance learning milieus, specifically MOOCs and webinars.

2.3.1. EFL and TEFL – a background of theories and methodologies

The research, theories and methodologies constructed around the subject EFL and TEFL are overwhelming (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Since the early 20th Century, particularly since the 1940's, theories and methodologies in the field of second-language learning, as well as the teaching thereof, abound (Taber, n.d.). Thankfully, we have come a long way since the days of mental aerobics and repetitive drilling of out-of-context vocabulary, reminiscent of the techniques employed in the learning of Latin and Greek by rote method, popular until the late 19th Century.
Griffiths (2004: 5) postulates that "Language learning strategies, although still fuzzily defined and controversially classified, are increasingly attracting the interest of contemporary educators because of their potential to enhance learning". She therefore provides a brief historical outline of second- or additional language learning strategies, which provide us with a wider background to inform our understanding of this subject-area.

According to Griffiths (2004: 5-7) language learning was steeped in rote learning for many years. During the 19th Century, Greek and Latin were taught by means of the 'grammar-translation' method, which mainly involved the teaching of grammar and the practice of translations as teaching and learning activities (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992, in Griffiths, 2004: 5-6). Lists were typically used to teach vocabulary and the main focus was on reading and writing, as opposed to speaking and listening. Moreover, instruction was mostly conducted in the learners' native language. Griffiths (2004: 6) explains that the result was "the type of grammar-translation courses remembered with distaste by thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorising endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 3-4, in Griffiths, 2004: 6). Little or no consideration was afforded to the learning of the target language from the learner's point of view, as the learning strategies did not focus in any way on the students' own input into their learning (Griffiths, 2004: 6).

During WW1 and WW2, a new method of teaching foreign languages emerged, partly as a reaction to the limitations of the grammar-translation method, but mostly due to the pressing war-time demand for fluency in languages such as German, French, Italian and Japanese (Griffiths, 2004: 6-7). This new strategy for teaching a foreign language was dubbed the "Army Method" and, through the use of audio-lingual teaching, it focused on a conversational proficiency in the target language, as opposed to proficiency in writing and reading. After the war, linguists adopted the "Army Method" as an alternative to the grammar-translation method and it
became known as the audio-lingual method. The audio-lingual method was further developed and became widely used during the 1960's. Griffiths (2004: 7) explains that the audio-lingual method relied heavily on repetition and practise drills, "which were justified according to behaviourist theories that language is a system of habits which can be taught and learnt on the stimulus, response and reinforcement basis that behaviourists believed controlled all human learning, including language learning". (Refer to 2.2.1 for an explanation of behaviourist theory.) According to Griffiths (2004: 7), the audio-lingual method was perhaps more effective than the grammar-translation method. However, it still left no room for learners to take any initiative in their own learning processes.

It was at this time, during the late 1960's and 1970's, that linguists postulated new theories on language learning, and the three main contemporary theories that have shaped our understanding of language acquisition today, and that can be applied to foreign language learning and teaching, are Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device, Krashen's Natural Approach to language acquisition, and the Communicative Language Teaching theory devised by British linguists in the 1970's and 1980's (Griffiths, 2004: 7).

2.3.1.1. **Noam Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device (LAD)**

It was at the time when the audio-linguistic method of language learning was at its most popular and the behaviourist theorists dominated the language learning landscape in the mid-1960's (see 2.3.1 above), that the well-known linguist, Noam Chomsky (1965: 25), first formulated his theories on language acquisition. Chomsky proposed that all human beings possess an innate ability to learn language and he calls this innate ability the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (van der Walt, 1991: 4). Furthermore, Chomsky held that this LAD enables humans to acquire and develop language by using an innate construct of principles, called the Universal Grammar (UG). Chomsky surmised that behaviourist theory could not account for the complex processes involved in generating and utilising
grammar and he concluded that “the creative aspect of language use, when investigated with care and respect for the facts, shows that current notions of habit and generalisation, as determinants of behaviour or knowledge, are quite inadequate” (Chomsky, 1968: 84).

Even though Chomsky's theories on language acquisition related to native language acquisition, his theories have been adopted by teachers of second- or additional language teachers across the globe (van der Walt, 1991: 5). Chomsky's theories have become popular and have been adopted in second-language teaching, because they account for the errors made by language learners when attempting to learn a second language. Their errors in construction when attempting to learn the target language is taken to prove that they possess an innate linguistic competence that subconsciously motivates them to apply and organise their innate linguistic knowledge in their learning of the target language (Griffiths, 2004: 7). Chomsky's LAD theory was a radical concept at the time because, for the first time, linguists explored the role of the learner in the language learning process (Griffiths, 2004: 7). According to Chomsky (1968), learning a language is a creative process, instead of a memorising technique and, furthermore, that the ability and capacity for learning language is a universally human phenomenon, directly related to the functioning of the brain.

Wen (2013: 148-149) advocates the application of Chomsky's theories as a solution to the teaching of English in China. He explains that a problem exists in the teaching of English as a foreign language in China, especially at secondary school level. Instead of the focus being on developing students' language skills and proficiency, teachers of English devote most of the class time in teaching English grammar to the learners. This is due to the immense pressure on students to achieve high marks in their College Entrance International Journal of Learning and Development Examinations, which will determine their placement at different universities. Thus, if they do not achieve the marks that they are aiming for, they might not get into their university of choice. Hence, reminiscent of the grammar-translation methods used in the 19th Century (discussed in 2.3.1 above), students are taught grammar by rote learning methodology. Furthermore, the focus is on
test-taking skills and English grammar, with vocabulary lists and translations used for drilling practise. Wen explains that many of the students who pass the Examinations with high grades are not able to communicate in English (Wen, 2013: 150). Wen advocates the principles of Chomsky's theory as a foundation for the way in which foreign languages are taught. He proposes that Chomsky's theories be applied to language teaching in China, especially insofar as the innate ability of children to learn language is concerned. According to Wen (2013: 150), with sufficient linguistic input of the target language, language learners will be able to apply their knowledge of UG (Universal Grammar) in acquiring the target language, due to their innate ability to acquire language for the purpose of communication. He advocates that more class time should be spent on practising language skills that can be used for real communication, instead of rote learning grammar rules (Wen, 2013: 150). Perhaps Krashen's Natural Approach (discussed in 2.3.1.2 below) should also be considered when postulating a solution to this problem, as theories are not cast in stone and aspects of different theories can be utilised for different teaching contexts.

It should be noted that Van der Walt (1991: 4-5) identifies certain problems with Chomsky's theories, especially when relying on the concept of UG (Universal Grammar) in second language learning practices. He quotes studies in which it was not clear that the same level of UG was evident in all of the learners. He further argues that the level of UG present in language learners will depend on their cognitive skills. He also points out that not all aspects of UG are present in all languages: "Although the principles of Universal Grammar (UG) are universal, not every principle operates in every language" (van der Walt, 1991: 6).

However, Griffiths surmises that certain aspects of Chomsky's theories are still relevant in the formulation of language teaching programmes and that, at the very least, his theories have provided a foundation of newer theories of language teaching and learning (Griffiths, 2004: 7).

2.3.1.2. Krashen's Natural Approach
During the 1970's linguists were working on formulating and developing strategies for language learning and, it is against this backdrop that Krashen first formulated his 'natural approach' to language learning and teaching (Griffiths, 2004: 8). Defying the rote learning methodologies of the grammar-translation method, challenging the effectiveness of the audio-lingual behaviourist theories, as well as opposing the concept that learners are consciously able to utilise their innate abilities to learn language, Krashen formulated five hypotheses (Griffiths, 2004: 8).

Summarised briefly (Krashen and Terrell, 1995: 26-39), these hypotheses comprise the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis (conscious learning is an ineffective way of developing language, which is better acquired through natural communication); the Natural Order Hypothesis (grammatical structures of a language are acquired in a predictable order); the Monitor Hypothesis (conscious learning is of very little value to an adult language learner, and can only be useful under certain conditions as a monitor or editor); the Input Hypothesis (language is acquired by understanding input which is a little beyond the current level of competence (comprehensible input)); and the Affective Filter Hypothesis (a learner’s emotions and attitudes can act as a filter which slows down the acquisition of language. When the affective filter is high it can block language development).

Schütz (2014) provides further insight into Krashen's theory of language acquisition, explaining that Krashen (1987 and 1988) draws the distinction between 'acquired' language and 'learned' language, particularly when seeking to be proficient in a foreign or second language. Krashen (1987, in Shütz, 2014) advocates a process of acquisition, which happens subconsciously in language learners and is similar to the way children process language when they acquire their first language. For acquisition to take place, Krashen proposes that meaningful communication in the target language needs to take precedence. Krashen calls this form of communication 'natural communication' and he places the emphasis on the learners' communicative acts, rather than on the form of their utterances. Moreover, Krashen postulates that language 'learning' is brought about by formal instruction in grammatical rules that are learned as a conscious
process, resulting in conscious knowledge about the target language. In Krashen's view, knowledge about a language does not necessarily lead to proficiency in communication in that target language (1988).

Krashen (1988, in Schütz, 2004) proposes that "The best methods [of language teaching] are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production." Krashen and Terrell (1995: 58) propose the following elements to be incorporated into additional language teaching:

1. The goal of the natural approach is communication skills – teaching should focus on the learners' ability to communicate meaningfully using the target language.
2. Comprehension precedes production – before learners can produce communication in the target language, they should first be able to comprehend messages in the target language.
3. Production emerges – production in the target language (speech and writing) will emerge as the acquisition process emerges and should not be forced onto the learners.
4. Acquisition activities are central – class activities that provide opportunities for the development of communication skills for the acquisition of the target language should be central to the teaching environment.
5. Lower the affective filter – the classroom environment should be sympathetic and welcoming in order to lower learners' resistance to the learning environment. The affective filter refers to anxieties that learners experience when learning the target language.

Griffiths (2004: 8-9) reviews Krashen's theory, indicating that it has been widely criticised by scholars, as its concepts of 'emergence' and the disdain for formal learning of grammatical rules are vague and unrealistic. In
particular, she proposes that conscious learning strategies should be incorporated when learning a target language. However, she does concede that Krashen's Natural Approach remains influential in the teaching and learning of foreign languages and that his views have shaped the focus on communicative language teaching that remains popular in teaching pedagogy up to the present day.

As shall be seen in the discussion below, Krashen's theory, as well as the earlier theories of language acquisition, led to the formulation and implementation of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT).

### 2.3.1.3. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

According to Littlewood (2013: 1) the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to language learning and teaching emerged in the late 1970's and early 1980's in Britain, as a response to the weaknesses of previous approaches in a world that demanded ever-increasing communication competencies. Littlewood (2013: 1-2) further points out that the CLT approach to language teaching has gained much favour due to the world-wide trend towards communicative competencies required in the rise of English as a lingua franca. He postulates that the characteristics of CLT are hard to pin down, and that it should be regarded as an umbrella term for approaches to language teaching "that aim to develop communicative competence through personally meaningful learning experiences." (Littlewood, 2013: 1).

Communicative competence is a term devised by Hymes (1972) (as explained in Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007: 95) and it refers to "communicative competence not only as an inherent grammatical competence but also as the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations" (Bagarić and Djigunović, 2007: 95). Canale and Swain (1980: 4) offer a further explanation of Hymes' concept of communicative competence in that it distinguishes between grammatical competence (knowledge of the grammatical structures of a language) and performance (the actual use of the language in socio-cultural contexts).
As for the practical application of CLT in language teaching, Littlewood (2013: 1-2) postulates that, within the approach to CLT, there has been a move towards task-based language teaching (TBLT), with a focus on communicative tasks that "serve not only as major components of the methodology but also as units around which a course may be organized" (Littlewood, 2004: 324 in Littlewood, 2013: 1-2). The aim of TBLT then, seems to be the development of communicative competence in the way that it proposes to develop the grammatical competence of students inasmuch as it enables them to produce coherent message in the target language in any number of socio-cultural contexts.

Furthermore, Richards (2006: 6-13) explains that current CLT approaches and methodologies encompass the following aspects:

1. **Skills-based teaching** – In this kind of syllabus, the focus is on developing the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Ideally, these skills should be integrated in order to serve the learner in real-life situations.

2. **Functional teaching** – This kind of syllabus is organised around the functions that a language learner should be able to perform in real-life situations, for example expressing likes and dislikes, agreeing and disagreeing with topics, introducing people, providing explanations and so forth. According to Richards (2006: 6-13) in functional teaching "Communicative competence is viewed as mastery of functions needed for communication across a wide range of situations. Vocabulary and grammar are then chosen according to the functions being taught."

3. **English for Specific Purposes** – In this approach, the focus is on teaching English for specific occupational purposes, in particular the teaching of specific kinds of language and communication skills required for specific purposes, for example the practice of medicine, engineering, being a flight attendant, being a biologist, and so forth. This approach requires a needs analysis (the use of observation, surveys, interviews, situation analysis, and analysis of language samples collected in different settings) in order to establish the kinds of communicative competency that language learners would need to master if they were in specific
occupational or educational roles and the language features of particular settings. The focus is on the use of language for specific, rather than general purposes.

However, Littlewood (2013: 2) points out that the CLT approach is vague and indefinable, which makes it difficult for language teachers to apply in real teaching practice, since the options offered for teaching methodologies are so varied. According to Littlewood (2013: 2-3) teachers find it hard to establish a balance between the four competencies (reading, writing, speaking and listening) in their teaching activities in real-life classroom contexts, as the CLT seems to "mean different things to different people". He further indicates that CLT can pose difficulties for teachers in classroom environments where class sizes are big and resources are limited (Littlewood, 2006: 5).

However, the main advantage of CLT appears to be the fact that it lends itself to a flexibility of application in varying settings and teaching language for varied purposes. Belchamber (2007) proposes that, with flexibility and adaptation to different purposes and setting, the CLT approach "In practical terms, whether assisting mixed-ability classes, aiding motivation, leading from a focus on form to one of fluency, or supporting learning, it [CLT] has a lot to offer the EFL teacher."

Moreover, Basta (2011: 139) concludes that CLT has many advantages for learners, as it can be adopted to varying learning situations and for a variety of purposes. In her view, benefits of CLT "include acquiring academic, social and generic skills." She points out that the focus of CLT should be to involve all learners in the classroom activities and that, at the very least; CLT "breaks the silence pattern that exists among students in the traditional classroom."

It is evident from the discussion above, therefore, that the emphasis in language learning and teaching has shifted to the acquisition of a second (and even foreign) language, as opposed to the randomised learning of a language out of context.
Gunn (2003: 23-38) provides a summative overview of the value of second language teaching approaches, concluding that these methods can be used in a variety of classroom settings in different ways. Thus, vocabulary and grammar drills, for example may be useful in some language teaching contexts, while Krashen’s ideas of comprehensible input are more apt in other classroom settings. In addition, certain concepts from CLT, such as learner-centred teaching, are widely used in language teaching today.

Since the emphasis of this study is on teaching the teachers in a TEFLA context and, in particular, utilising digital tools of learning in the distance-education environment of learning, the discussion now turns its focus towards models that inform the training of foreign language teachers in a distance-learning environment.

2.3.2. Models related to the training of foreign language teachers in a distance learning context

The discussion below will focus on models that represent the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills; as well as models of delivery of language teacher training programmes in a distance education landscape.

2.3.2.1. Models representing the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills

The United States Distance Learning Association defines distance learning as "The acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance" (Steele, 2014).

In the context of training foreign language teachers, Wallace (1991: 14-15) identifies two kinds of knowledge development required in any teacher education course, namely received knowledge and experiential knowledge. Received knowledge is described as the process of the trainee becoming familiar with "the vocabulary of the subject and the matching concepts, research findings, theories and skills which are widely accepted as being part of the necessary intellectual content of the profession." (Wallace, 1991: 14). Therefore, the learner-teacher develops their own proficiency in the use
of the target language through the acquisition of knowledge in the context of the language learning itself, including basic grammatical constructs required in certain scenarios; the use of realia in the classroom; giving instructions to learners; arranging group work in class; as well as understanding and explaining phonetics and pronunciation to learners of the target language. Wallace's concept of received knowledge therefore ties in with the socio-cultural theory as discussed in 2.2.2, as learners become familiar with their particular socio-cultural environment as being part of the foreign language learner-teacher community. In addition, one may also link Wallace's idea of received knowledge to the Communicative Language Teaching approach to second-language learning as far as the proposed methodology of teaching is concerned.

Experiential knowledge, on the other hand, is the development of schemata by the trainees related to the "knowledge-in-action by practice of the profession" (Wallace, 1991: 15). This experiential knowledge encompasses all of the interactions, as well as the social constructs involved in the learning of a foreign language and also offers the opportunity for reflection on practice. One may therefore link this concept of experiential knowledge to the connectivism and socio-cultural theories, as discussed in the Theoretical Framework in this chapter.

Wallace (1991: 15) further proposes that received knowledge, combined with experiential knowledge, leads to teaching practice, a reflection on the trainee's practice, which then, in turn, leads to the development of professional competence. Wallace (ibid.) calls it the reflective model for teacher education:
Figure 1: Wallace’s reflective model for teacher education (Wallace, 1991: 15).

Wallace’s model is useful in the context of training teachers of English as a foreign language, not only as a model for understanding how the learning happens, but also insofar as it relates to the socio-cultural theory described in the Theoretical Framework of this chapter. This model clearly illustrates that the teaching (and learning) of the target language is directly related to, and dependent on, the socio-cultural aspects involved in the teaching of the target language.

Furthermore, Wallace (1991: 29) lists reasons for trainees being involved in a variety of teaching and learning modes:

1. Trainees’ learning styles vary, and this should be reflected in teaching strategies.
2. Trainees ought to be encouraged to experiment with a variety of learning strategies.
3. To avoid boredom: as in most other aspects of life, variety adds spice and stimulus to the learning process.
4. Variety makes teaching more interesting for the tutor also: too much predictability in teaching situations leads to mechanical teaching.
5. The tutor gets to know her trainees better and is better able to evaluate them fairly by seeing them operate in a variety of learning situations.
6. Different learning experiences are more appropriate to different learning purposes.
Wallace's model also relates to the connectivist theory of learning as, through the different learning experiences and reflection on the learning experiences, trainees are able to make connections to sources of information through a variety of teaching and learning modes.

Wallace's model is useful, then, as a paradigm for the construction of a digital model of delivery of an English Foreign language training course in a distance education context. Received knowledge can be combined with experiential knowledge through the navigation of the social constructs involved in online learning spaces and shared through the principle of connectivism. Furthermore, the opportunities for collaboration in an online learning space can provide the opportunities for reflection that can, in turn, lead to professional competence.

On the other hand, McGrath (in Howard and McGrath, 1993: 71) offers a slightly different and more simplified model of the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills:
McGrath (in Howard and McGrath, 1993: 72) explains that "Knowledge, according to this model, can only become skills through suitable experience; and experience distilled through personal reflection serves to refine and extend the knowledge-base." Thus, teaching experience is what transfers theoretical knowledge, combined with self-reflection, into teaching skill.

He further posits that certain knowledge is acquired through classroom experiences, but that there is a certain body or collection of "descriptive knowledge" (ibid.) that is more appropriately learned from sources outside of the classroom. He specifically mentions "analytical knowledge about the target language... principles on which teaching can be planned and conducted... awareness-raising in relation to cultural differences, individual learner differences, and teaching aids and resources." (ibid.). He goes on to advocate "sustained and systematic study" as the preferred method for acquiring the knowledge that is essential to learning to be an effective teacher.

In his explanation then, he places much emphasis on the "knowledge" aspect of his model. While it is true that experience, skill and reflection also form important aspects of teacher-training programmes (and rightly so), this study focuses on this aspect that embodies the acquisition of knowledge, especially in a distance-learning context. In particular, this study is more interested in how digital tools can serve as sources of knowledge in order to promote such "sustained and systematic study."

According to Perraton (in Howard and McGrath, 1993:23), the aims and purposes of most teacher education focus on providing a general education; on improving subject content knowledge; on teaching theories regarding educational methodologies; and to demonstrate teaching skills.
This summary of the aims and purposes of teacher education essentially echo the two models mentioned above; that is, the models presented by Wallace and McGrath both attempt to illustrate the four aims outlined by Perraton. Since the aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of introducing a MOOC and a webinar to a TEFLA teacher training programme, one may classify the incorporation of these digital teaching tools as belonging to all four of these aims. The existing content and study material offered by the TEFLA programme at Unisa encompasses these aims of providing a general education; improving subject knowledge; teaching educational theory; as well as showing how to teach. (A more detailed description of the TEFLA Programme at UNISA will follow in 2.4. below.) The MOOC and webinar as digital tools can, however, act as complementary learning spaces for students in order to enhance their experience and understanding of these four aims. This claim will be substantiated in Chapter 4 – Discussion and analysis of findings.

Perraton points out, however, that these four elements of teacher training are generally hard to balance and, in addition, a critical challenge is posed to the teacher education profession due to the exceptional growth in the demand for teachers worldwide (Perraton, 1993: 24-25). She explains that

The speed at which education has grown in the last forty years means that the education profession has itself had to expand at a historically unprecedented rate... The numerical imperatives, doubts about costs, concern about effects, and a growing commitment to continuing education have together led to an interest in alternative methods of teacher education. One of these is distance education, which has been used both for the initial training of teachers... and for their continuing education, in both industrialised and developing countries.

Withal, she regards the use of technology in distance learning as a solution (at least in part) to this challenge. She postulates that the use of technology in distance education allows teachers to be educated without being taken out of the classroom. Furthermore, she explains that the use of technology enables distance learning institutions to educate and accommodate large numbers of students, by offering alternative models of teacher-training (Perraton, 1993: 25).
Therefore, the discussion now turns to a brief investigation into the models of delivery of language teacher training programmes in distance education, with particular attention to the use of technologies in the current distance-learning environment.

2.3.2.2. Models of delivery of language teacher training programmes in distance education

Cynthia White (2003) considers the impact on- and possibilities (as well as challenges) posed by the use of technologies in language learning in a distance education environment. She describes distance education as "having evolved through a number of successive waves or generations, in response to developments in technology." (White, 2013: 13). She describes a three-generational model that may be summarised in the following graphic:

![Figure 3: White's 3-generational model of delivery in distance learning (2013: 13).](image)

The first generation focuses on delivery of teaching through the use of traditional correspondence media of delivery, including printed study material. The second generation of delivery in a distance education environment points to the incorporation of multiple media in the shape of teleconferences, combined with the traditional printed delivery, as well as recordings and videos made available to students. Finally, the third generation of delivery points to study material being made available to learners online. All three generations highlight the significance of
technology available at that particular time throughout each phase of development in the distance learning environment. Furthermore, White (2013: 13) mentions a four generation model as proposed by Rumble (2001):

Figure 4: Rumble's 4-generational model of delivery in distance education.

Rumble's model is slightly different to White's, in that it considers the third generation as providing study material and teaching methodology through the use of multiple media tools, including all electronic forms of communication, not limited to activities that take place online. Rumble's model also includes a fourth generation in the delivery of learning programmes in a distance education environment, by means of educational approaches that mostly take place via the Internet. The TEFLA programme offered by UNISA can be positioned somewhere in the 3rd generation of distance language learning proposed by both models, insofar as the media utilised for the delivery of course material consist of CMC and a digital learning tool for access to information.

Perhaps Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory is most relevant in this particular context, as it contends that language acquisition, as well as teaching, is achieved through the shaping of human consciousness, achieved by the internalisation of shared social behaviour (Britton, 1994: 261). This shared social behaviour links with the socio-cultural theory of language teaching and learning as described in the Theoretical Framework of this paper. Informed by the framework of this theory, the teaching and learning of ESL and TEFLA should incorporate digital tools of learning as an aid to
navigating the digital landscape shaping the current socio-cultural environment. Furthermore, the introduction of a MOOC and a webinar in order to enhance and expand the learning tools offered to students could help project UNISA into the realm of Rumble’s fourth-generation delivery in distance education.

Leach (1993: 35) provides us with a specific model to illustrate the delivery of a language teacher training programme by distance-education:

![Figure 5: Leach's model representing distance learning modules and support.](image)

As mentioned before, the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA already encompasses all of elements in Leach's model. The face-to-face components are addressed during the teaching practical sessions that all students are required to complete; the administrative system is managed by the administration officer at The Povey Centre; and the pedagogical aspects, as represented in the middle section of this model, are already present in the current study material (a more detailed discussion of the TEFLA programme will follow in 2.4.). However, Leach's model does not indicate whether the delivery utilises digital tools or not. Therefore, this study aims to demonstrate that this model of delivery can be enhanced by the introduction of digital learning tools in order to create a more learner-centred focus in the delivery of the theoretical knowledge base of the programme. The assumption is that providing some of the required knowledge on digital tools can assist the students in employing strategies of
connectivity, as well as socio-culturalism, in order to engage with the study material with meta-cognitive understanding.

The suggested MOOC and webinar to be investigated, aim to provide both synchronous- and asynchronous learning tools. At this point, it is therefore advantageous to consider the definitions of these two concepts.

2.3.3. Synchronous and Asynchronous learning

White (2003: 9) expands on the spectrum of distance language learning contexts in terms of distance, place and time. She explains that asynchronous distance learning implies the access to learning experiences at any time, at any distance from the educational institution and at any place convenient for the student. The use of CMC is particularly valuable in asynchronous contexts of learning, as the information can be accessed on digital tools at any distance, place and time.

Synchronous distance language learning, on the other hand, involves the use of technologies for communication in "real time" through the use of discussion forums and webinars, for example (White, 2003: 10). In order to combine the benefits of all the technologies available and, therefore, achieve a healthy combination of asynchronous and synchronous forms of delivery, White suggests the use of different digital tools in order to move towards multi-synchronous learning. In this mode of course delivery, various technologies and digital learning tools are used complementary to each other in order to enhance the learning experience by making it more learner-centric.

Furthermore, Jennings (1993: 105) contends that, in order to overcome the challenges posed by distance in the training of language teachers in a distance-learning environment, communication technologies can be used to provide virtual social spaces where students can engage with other learners, as well as with educators.

In addition, Motteram's study on distance education for language teachers using educational technology (1993: 95) reveals that the use of online learning is increasingly becoming a necessary part of ELT in general and
that distance-learning materials are more flexible in their availability due to technology.

Furthermore, Broady (1993: 49-62), as well as Haworth and Parker (1993: 78-94), emphasise the importance of autonomy in the distance-learning language learner-teacher. They explain that, ultimately, the learner-teacher in a distance-learning landscape needs to take responsibility for their own constructs of knowledge and experience, by making full use of the different sources of knowledge available to them. In return, however, models of delivery should provide different learning resources and tools in order to enable students to access the relevant study content easily and conveniently.

In a case study, Broady (ibid.) explores participants' experience of a TFL (Teaching Foreign Languages) diploma for practising modern-language teachers in adult, further and higher education in England. In this case study Broady emphasises the need for learning tools designed to offer learner-teachers a wide range of learning opportunities in order to stimulate a more autonomous approach to studying (1993: 56).

The 2004 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) analytical survey on Information and Communication Technologies in the teaching and learning of foreign languages emphasises that ICT’s can broaden the opportunities for language learning. The Internet offers a vast array of classroom settings that offer updated course material developed by experts in the cultural and geographical context of the target language, making the unique cultural aspects and uses of the target language more tangible (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

The use of online learning and digital tools of course content availability, therefore, would certainly provide the learning opportunities to stimulate an autonomous approach to studying; it would also offer convenience, as well as ease of access, for students. In addition, utilising technology for this purpose could be regarded as positive development in teaching methodology, instead of mere course delivery. Moreover, the introduction of digital tools as opportunities and resources for learning would certainly
move UNISA firmly into a 4th generation model of distance language learning and teaching course delivery. Furthermore, multi-synchronous learning would enable students to learn through the principles of connectivism, as well as the socio-cultural theory demanding constructs of meaning through the experience involved in the culture of ESL learning.

The discussion now turns to investigation into the digital tools that could be considered as most appropriate in the context of the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA.

2.3.4. Computer mediated communication and the use of digital tools in TEFLA teaching

So far, this chapter has investigated the merits of incorporating digital learning tools into a language teacher-training programme at a distance-education institution. This discussion now turns towards an examination of what constitutes relevant and advantageous digital tools that will enhance the learning process in a TEFLA teacher-training short learning programme.

Santally and Senteni (2005: 27) point out that the use of technology in the delivery of course material should always serve to enhance the learning experience and that, in the context of distance education, "The web therefore can be seen as (1) a new delivery medium for distance education materials; (2) a flexible and rich medium (in terms of multimedia) for students to access their learning materials and (3) a medium offering a new paradigm for learning."

Furthermore, Conrad and Donaldson (2011: 5) propose that

Students cannot be passive knowledge-absorbers who rely on the instructor to feed information to them. In an online course, it is imperative that they be active knowledge-generators who assume responsibility for constructing and managing their own learning experience. In a learner-centred environment, the traditional instructor responsibilities such as generating resources and leading discussions shift to the learners. Success in an online learning environment depends on the use of instructional strategies that support the shift in roles and the development of self-direction.
However, as was demonstrated earlier in this chapter, one also needs to remain aware of the different skills-levels and digital literacy of individual students and, therefore, any digital tools of learning should be offered in such a way that students are at liberty to choose how much of the knowledge that is made available, they want to incorporate into their own learning. In support of this claim, Conrad and Donaldson (2011: 7-8) suggest that students' abilities to be engaged learners progress with usage and that engaging interactively and collaboratively is not inherent in adult learners who have received previous instruction in a mainly lecture-based context.

Thus, any digital tools of learning should offer students the opportunity to engage with the knowledge in their own time, and at their own pace, and should, moreover, be easy and convenient to access. One may further link online engagement to the socio-cultural theory, in that students need to make use of cultural artefacts (in this case, the online digital learning sphere) in order to navigate their way around the socio-cultural group (the group of students) in order to construct meaning. Furthermore, the ability to access the information on any digital tool of education requires the digital literacy skills and connectivity as outlined in the theory of connectivism.

Starkey (2012: 48) offers an interesting view on using digital technologies for the purpose of creating knowledge. In her view, the value of the connectivist idea that knowledge is created through connecting parts of systems that contain information, then learners in the current digital environment are learning to acquire knowledge through participation and not just passive consumption.

She further points out the role of creativity in creating knowledge, by referring to Plato's (360 BC) distinction between artists who manipulate tools at their disposal to recreate what is already known, and artists who are able to construct something new as a result of manipulating those very same tools. She sums up that "being able to reproduce an existing reality through a knowledge product would be skilful rather than a demonstration of creativity in the sense of creating new knowledge." (Starkey, 2012:48).
While one could surmise that a high level of creativity is a preferable, and perhaps even essential, quality in language teachers, one would have to leave this philosophising to the experts in the fields of sociology and psycho-analysis. Alternatively, this would be an entire study on its own. Suffice to say, at this point, that applying the skills required by connectivism and socio-culturalism would certainly demand a certain level of creativity. Once again, this would differ from one student to the next, depending on factors such as digital literacy and proficiency.

Starkey (2012: 71) has the last word here, as she encapsulates the experience of learning in this digital age as "a process of mastering concocts and skills, exploring the boundaries of these and creating knowledge through connections".

With a myriad of technologies to choose from as digital learning spaces, and in the light of the views discussed in this chapter, the analysis of the effectiveness of CTCs insofar as they enhance a distance-learning language teacher programme, will be informed by how much the proposed digital tools succeed in:

1. offering learner-teachers the opportunity to receive knowledge, experience the knowledge in a classroom environment, turn the knowledge into teaching skills and, lastly, the opportunity to reflect on the usefulness of the knowledge;
2. offering synchronous learning opportunities; as well as
3. asynchronous learning opportunities;
4. encouraging autonomy and creativity;
5. offering the opportunities to construct knowledge through connectivism and socio-culturalism;
6. being learner-centred;
7. offering ease of access and convenience; and
8. enhancing the current pedagogical methodology of teaching and learning.

Therefore, in order to establish the usefulness of digital tools of learning against the backdrop of connectivism and socio-cultural constructs of
meaning in the enhancement of language teacher-learning in a distance education environment, the following technologies will be assessed as additional resources to the existing delivery of the TEFLA programme offered at UNISA: MOOCs and webinars.

2.3.4.1. MOOCs

A MOOC is a free, subject-relevant Massive Open Online Course. It is accessed via an internet connection and registration is usually free. This is a form of asynchronous learning, as students register and log on in their own time. Some MOOCs have specific start and end dates, but registration of some MOOCs are non-time specific. MOOCs are, by their very nature, massive insofar as registration numbers are concerned, with enrolments numbering hundreds of thousands in some instances (Glance, Forsey and Riley, 2013). Furthermore, Glance, Forsey and Riley (2013) outline the characteristics of MOOCs as "lectures formatted as short videos combined with formative quizzes; automated assessment and/or peer and self-assessment and an online forum for peer support and discussion". In addition, these authors point out that, even though MOOCs are not considered to be particularly constructed to optimise learning, some scholars have claimed that MOOCs "are based on sound pedagogical foundations that are at the very least comparable with courses offered by universities in face-to-face mode" (Glance, Forsey and Riley, 2013). To validate these claims, these authors reviewed the literature for empirical evidence substantiating such claims. Although they found little empirical evidence directly related to MOOCs, the evidence that they did find suggested that MOOCs offer a learning experience that is not necessarily any less effective than their face-to-face counterparts. According to their findings, MOOCs may, in some aspects, actually improve learning outcomes. These authors conducted a study on the pedagogical foundations of MOOCs and outline the characteristics and their related pedagogical benefits as follows (Glance, Forsey and Riley, 2013):

Characteristics of MOOCs and their related pedagogical benefits.
### MOOC characteristics and Pedagogical benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOOC characteristic</th>
<th>Pedagogical benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online mode of delivery</td>
<td>Efficacy of online learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online quizzes and assessments</td>
<td>Retrieval learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short videos and quizzes</td>
<td>Mastery learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer and self-assessment</td>
<td>Enhanced learning through this assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short videos</td>
<td>Enhanced attention and focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online forums</td>
<td>Peer assistance, out-of-band learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6: Characteristics of MOOCs and their related pedagogical benefits.**

In addition, McLoughlin and Lee (2008: 647) summarise the opportunities offered by technologies in a distance education environment as follows:

In the digital age and Web 2.0 world, driven by high connectivity and ubiquitous, demand-driven learning, we are beginning to see the growth of paradigms of active learning that enable us to expand our vision of pedagogy, where learners are active participants or co-producers of knowledge rather than passive consumers of content and learning is seen as a participatory, social process supporting personal life goals and needs.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are an integral part of digital learning being offered to learners world-wide. Giddens (2013: 12) informs us that MOOCs are free courses offered online to millions of learners who may not have access to paid courses offered by educational institutions. He is of the opinion that the right quality MOOCs, teaching relevant content, can enhance the learning process of teacher-learners in a foreign language context.

Jon Baggaley (2013: 368-378) points out that MOOCs have emerged as an informal source of learning for millions of students because they are less complicated; there is no supervision; there are no registration fees or education level requirements; they are easily accessible through computers;
the number of students are unlimited; and students get the opportunity to teach each other and assess each other’s work. These factors have made MOOCs the most accessible form of education in history.

Baggaley (2013: 368-378) does warn, however, that MOOCs do not seem to uphold the pedagogical principles of traditional models of education and that the success of MOOCs as a tool for the enhancement of the learning process is yet to be proven by further studies. Furthermore, MOOCs are altruistic in nature and therefore, the education level of participants is not measured. This might prove to be a detrimental factor in the learning process where all of the teaching and learning is student-driven.

Therefore, utilising a MOOC as a source of knowledge needs to remain in the realm of methodology that aims to enhance the students’ learning experience. The focus, therefore, in the context of teacher-training, should be on an augmentation of pedagogical content knowledge.

The MOOC identified as appropriate in the context of the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, which will form the basis of this study's investigation, will be outlined and discussed in Chapter 3.

2.3.4.2. Webinars

A webinar (web + seminar) is an online workshop or seminar, accessed via an internet connection, scheduled to take place at a specific time (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, 2015). Due to its online nature, students can access and participate in the webinar using their personal computer, laptop or other mobile device, from anywhere. A webinar allows for interaction with a tutor by means of questions posted in a dialogue box during the webinar. This allows the tutor to address concerns and questions of the students synchronously. It also allows for students to answer each other's questions and address concerns that may arise during the webinar.
This synchronous tool of instruction in a distance-learning environment addresses Jennings' concerns (1993: 105) regarding the need for interactivity in the distance teaching context, particularly as it pertains to the ESL and TEFLA teacher trainee (as discussed earlier in this chapter).

Furthermore, any CMC in the distance learning space should strive toward incorporating Wallace's concepts of received knowledge, as well as experiential knowledge, in teacher education, as portrayed in figure 1. Moreover, as detailed in the theoretical framework and literature review, digital tools of learning should be utilised against the *mise en scène* of connectivism and socio-cultural constructs of meaning in the enhancement of language teacher-learning in a distance education environment; it should foster new paradigms of learning through authentic, relevant and comprehensible technologies that are accessible and convenient; and offer learner-centred connectivity of learning as a pedagogical methodology in a move towards a 4th generation delivery of distance learning.

Anderson (2010: 33) surmises that education needs to "move beyond instructing and testing for learner competencies to allow and support learners in a journey to capacity rather than competency. Capacity includes being able to learn in new and unfamiliar contexts." It is evident that Anderson's comments echo the sentiments advocated by the theories of connectivism, as well as socio-cultural constructs of learning.

Studies conducted on the use of webinars in the distance-education context are scarce. However, Wang and Hsu (2008: 175-194) conducted a study in order to investigate how webinars can successfully be integrated into an online learning environment. Their study assessed the experiences of student-trainers who used webinar tools as part of their training. They found that student-trainers were satisfied with their "webinar-facilitated delivery of conceptual knowledge". Furthermore, they found that their use of a webinar provided an almost face-to-face learning environment that increased their participants’ social presence and facilitated multi-level interaction. However, they did identify some challenges that arose in
utilising a webinar and subsequently formulated suggestions for the successful use of this digital space as a learning tool.

Firstly, Wang and Hsu (2008: 186-187) suggest that only conceptual knowledge should be offered during a webinar and that instructors should not attempt to place heavy cognitive loads on the participants. Secondly, they advise that participants should possess a certain level of digital literacy in order to access and navigate the webinar and, furthermore, that instructors should be aware of certain technical problems that may arise, such as issues of Internet availability, hosting software continuity and technological limitations. They therefore suggest a "back-up plan" in the event of such technical failures.

The use of webinars as additional resources of learning, as investigated in this study, will be outlined in Chapter 3 and the subsequent findings will be analysed in Chapter 4, with deductions offered in Chapter 5.

This dissertation will now provide an outline and explanation of the TEFLA programme offered as a Short Learning Programme at The Povey Centre for English Studies at UNISA, in order to familiarise the reader with the pedagogical background against which this research is conducted.

2.4. The Povey Centre for English Studies at UNISA

The Povey Centre for English Studies aims to promote and support further research in English Studies in Southern Africa (The Povey Centre for English Studies (a), 2015). The Centre strives to support a community of learners which is motivated and inspired to attain English as a second language (The Povey Centre for English Studies (b), 2015).

The Centre's vision is "To offer SLPs [Short Learning Programmes] and community engagement projects in a range of topics and subjects within the context of English Studies in response to needs and expectations in the wider community" (The Povey Centre for English Studies (a), 2015). Its
mission focuses on embracing "diversity and excellence in tuition of short learning programmes and community engagements projects as well as promote student centeredness and service delivery in English Studies" (The Povey centre for English Studies (a), 2015). The Centre offers non-degree SLPs through distance learning, as well as face-to-face skills training workshops, conferences and seminars.

The following courses are offered at The Povey Centre (The Povey Centre for English Studies (c)):

- TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults)
- Introduction to Creative Writing
- IEFLS (Intensive English for Foreign Language Speakers)
- Business Writing Skills Workshops
- English for Empowerment Workshops

This discussion will now turn to a brief outline of the TEFLA course offered at The Povey Centre.

2.4.1. The TEFLA Programme at The Povey Centre for English Studies

This course is designed to prepare learners to be effective teachers of English as a Foreign Language to adults. Therefore, there are two main components included in this programme:

1. A self-study component
2. A practical teaching component

1. As far as the **self-study component** is concerned, the TEFLA Certificate course is an online distance-learning programme, which entails that learners access the study material via an internet connection and that they work through the study material on their own by means of self-study at
home. A course coordinator is assigned (in this case, the researcher), who is responsible for sending important notices and information via e-mail; posting important notices and discussions on the myUnisa online portlet; and being contactable via WhatsApp for guidance and assistance (please note that direct contact with the course co-ordinator was only relevant to Semester 2 of 2014. Thereafter, the UNISA policies and procedures changed, so that the course co-ordinator is now only contactable via postings on the myUnisa portlet.

Students are required to:

- navigate their way around the myUnisa website, where all of the course work, announcements and discussions are posted;
- work through the 4 Units in Study Guide 1 (TEFL01-6) and 6 Units in Study Guide 2 (TEFL02-8) (more details regarding the two modules are outlined in 2.4.1.1 and 2.4.1.2. below);
- get a good grasp and understanding of the material through autonomous study;
- complete the activities in the study guides as a means of self-evaluation;
- participate in the online discussion forums on myUnisa;
- register for a free MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) and completing this online course before the end of the semester;
- regularly engage in the specified OERs (Open Education Resources), the links of which are made available to learners;
- provide detailed feedback in their Teaching Portfolio of Evidence on the suggested MOOC and OERs, at the end of the semester;
- prepare and submit assignments, as well as a Teaching Portfolio of Evidence, by the due dates.

2. The **practical teaching component** consists of the following:

Students are required to complete 20 hours of teaching practice by a specified date. The Povey Centre assists learners with the scheduling of
these sessions at *The Bright Site Project* – a UNISA project in Pretoria where second-language English is taught to immigrants from African countries. Should students not be able to attend the teaching practical sessions in Pretoria, they are required to find an institution in their own area where they can complete the required 20 hours of teaching practice. Students are required to teach lessons to foreign learners in order to practise their teaching skills. They are also required to observe their peers as they present their lessons and participate in the feedback sessions afterwards. Furthermore, students are required to complete administrative tasks such as keeping a journal of their teaching experience, completing observation sheets and a self-evaluation form after each of their lessons.

Students are then formally assessed during the practical teaching assessments toward the end of the semester. A report is compiled on their teaching and they are awarded a grade for the practical work. Where students complete their practical teaching sessions in a location other than *The Bright Site* in Pretoria, reports are required from the institutions where they taught in order to assess their teaching practice.

This is a short intensive course and so it expects a great deal from students in a short space of time. Students are expected to show progress in both their grasp of the EFL (English Foreign Language) theory and in the lessons that they present. Lastly, students are encouraged to become reflective about their teaching and to evaluate themselves constantly.

In addition to the teaching sessions, learners are expected to examine the course book materials that they will use, plan their lessons and write out detailed lesson plans.

It is evident, therefore, that the TEFLA programme offered by the Povey Centre expects a great deal from students in terms of autonomous study and taking responsibility for their own development as learner-teachers. Furthermore, it offers opportunities for rich student interaction through synchronous-, as well as asynchronous learning activities. Students form part of a socio-cultural group of learning in which they learn to navigate the socio-cultural artefacts (namely, the study material and external resources).
in order to acquire knowledge and apply the knowledge to their own teaching practice. The course, therefore, encompasses both received- and experiential knowledge. Moreover, students are encouraged to form their own connections to sources of knowledge and practical teaching pedagogies through registering for and making use of external OERs (Open Education Resources) and MOOCs. Through their connectivity in these resources, they create, assess and apply their knowledge and integrate this knowledge into their own teaching practice.

Following below is an outline of the content of the two study guides, namely TEFL01-6 and TEFL02-8, which will provide more detail about the content of the study material on offer.

2.4.1.1. **TEFL01-6: An Introduction to English Grammar**

The aim of this module is to build competence and accuracy in English language proficiency in students so as to facilitate the teaching of grammatical concepts in English as a foreign language. Learning and teaching of English grammar is facilitated in this study guide by

- promoting familiarity with grammatical terms
- applying the theory to practical activities
- demonstrating how the knowledge of grammar can affect the teaching of grammar
- demonstrating that the teaching of grammatical concepts can be *fun* and empowering to teachers and students

It is taken in this study guide as essential for teachers of English to have a sound grasp of English grammatical concepts. However, since this is an introductory course, students are not expected to demonstrate a wealth of knowledge of every grammatical concept in the English language and the view is that it can only be the beginning of an on-going investigation. Teachers need to follow up the areas only touched on in this guide and therefore, it is advisable to have access to one or two good grammar books.
Teachers constantly need to check up on grammar points before teaching a lesson and thus several books are recommended as additional resources for English grammar. This study guide is divided into four study units, as follows:

- **Unit 1 – an Introduction to Grammar**
  The proposed outcomes for this unit are: to formulate a definition of grammar; to recognise the two basic types of sentences; to identify subjects, verbs, objects, complements and adverbials; to identify eight word classes, know their functions and be able to provide examples of each; to recognise nouns, noun phrases and the various noun types; to identify verb types, forms and the various tenses; and to differentiate between an adjective and an adverb.

- **Unit 2 – Language Analysis**
  The proposed outcomes for this unit are: to realise the importance of analysing language in teaching and learning; to analyse language in terms of meaning, form and use; to identify collocations; to recognise the relationship between words; and to analyse language and function.

- **Unit 3 – Grammar in the Classroom**
  The proposed outcomes for this unit are: to examine the need to teach grammar in language teaching; to describe the assumptions students make about vocabulary (about exact equivalents between languages) and also discuss how to raise awareness of this; to plan how to build up a wide vocabulary in students in the classroom; to plan teaching strategies that ensure vocabulary is remembered; to explain the difference between the intentional and incidental learning of vocabulary and how these can be fostered; to discuss the 'lexical approach'; to explain the links between the teaching of vocabulary and structures; to describe three different approaches to teaching language structures; to analyse typical grammar activities from EFL course books; to teach those activities in the classroom;
and to apply the above knowledge gained to develop suitable grammar
teaching tools.

- **Unit 4 – Pronunciation**
The outcomes of this unit are: to identify phonemes; to identify and mark
word stress; to identify and mark sentence stress; to recognise and mark
intonation; to recognise and mark connected speech; and to develop
effective teaching techniques for pronunciation activities.

This module is therefore theoretical in nature, in that it expands students'knowledge of English grammar and also guides them regarding the
understanding and teaching of grammar to foreign language English
students. Although the aim seems to be to teach English to foreign language
speakers by the CLT approach, this course content is highly theoretical in
order to familiarise the learner-teachers with grammatical concepts of the
language in order for them to construct lesson plans that aim to instruct
their students.

The more practical teaching component of the course is encompassed in the
next module, namely TEFL02-8, which will be outlined below.

**2.4.1.2. TEFL02-8: The Principles and Practice of Foreign
Language Teaching**

The aim of this study guide is to provide students with guidance on the
principles and practice of English foreign language teaching. It provides an
introduction to the theories and practice of teaching in this field and it
involves students in the construction of concepts around what teachers'roles should be in this discipline of teaching. Furthermore, it outlines a
number of teaching methodologies and relates these methodologies to
different classroom settings. Moreover, this study guide aims to broaden
students' understanding and incorporation of classroom management and it
also aims to enlighten students on the concept of skills training. Finally, it
highlights the importance of professional development as an ongoing process in teaching.

This study guide consists of 6 learning units, which are constructed as follows:

- **Unit 1 – Introduction to Foreign Language Teaching**
The outcomes of this study unit are: to distinguish between assumptions, particularly students' own, and researched knowledge; to distinguish between language acquisition and language learning; to describe some new ideas about how language learning can be encouraged; to explain the basic principles of foreign language teaching; to explain current theories of foreign language teaching and learning, in particular the communicative approach; and to use some new terms used in the field of EFL education.

- **Unit 2 – Teachers and Learners in Language Learning**
The outcomes of this learning unit are: to examine students' assumptions about the teacher's role in learning; to explain three broad types of an EFL teacher; to explain the many roles the flexible teacher takes on in the classroom; to link the types of learning and the appropriate role for the teacher to play; to describe the different learning styles and how teachers can cater for them; to list the various language levels of EFL learning; and to explain how to create a relaxed and nurturing classroom environment.

- **Unit 3 – Methodology**
The proposed outcomes for this learning unit are: to distinguish between implicit learning and explicit teaching; to distinguish between two models of teaching: the PPP model and Task-based learning; to discuss the PPP Approach; to design a lesson according to the PPP Approach; to discuss the Task-Based Learning Approach; to design a lesson according to Task-Based Learning Approach; and to discuss the possibilities of flexibility and range in an eclectic approach.
• **Unit 4 – Classroom Management**
The outcomes of this learning unit are: to develop effective classroom management skills suitable for an EFL classroom; to reflect on and grade teacher language to suit an EFL classroom; to plan and use non-verbal communication that aids the teaching of language; to use effective elicitation techniques; to use effective techniques to check the understanding of students; to plan appropriate lesson aims for language learning; to complete a formal lesson plan; to make effective use of visual aids such as the whiteboard in an EFL classroom; and to use EFL course books and materials to prepare lessons.

• **Unit 5 – Skills Work**
The outcomes of this learning unit include: to explain the difference between receptive skills and productive skills; to describe the close links between the four communicative skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing; to compare extensive and intensive exposure to language and vocabulary; to describe and implement the process of a receptive skills lesson; to explain some of the techniques used for providing listening experiences and follow-up activities to them; to list the range of activities and genres for reading activities and listening; to compare the written and spoken word, e.g. the role played by paralinguistic expression and expressive devices as well as the features of connected speech; to describe the specific difficulties that face EFL students in speaking and writing the target language; to describe the process of a speaking activity; to examine the teacher's role of developing fluency in a speaking activity; to describe the difference between a fluency and accuracy based activity; to describe the range of speaking activities and writing activities that EFL teachers use; to explain the different approaches used by EFL educators to develop writing skills such as process writing and genre analysis; to describe a range of correction techniques used for writing tasks; and to use correction codes in marking writing tasks from students.

• **Unit 6 – Professional Development**
The outcomes of this learning unit are: to make decisions regarding use of materials for EFL teaching; to adapt existing EFL materials for a given context; to develop strategies to evaluate course material; to discuss possible problems (and suitable solutions) that occur in EFL teaching and learning; to use multimedia in the classroom; to begin to make teaching decisions using training and good intuition; and to access resources for further development as a teacher and for finding job opportunities.

From the outcomes listed for each unit, it is evident that this course content focuses on a number of EFLT theories, as discussed in 2.3.1. Firstly, unit 1 explores a number of different theories around language learning and teaching, including Chomsky's LAD. The aim here is to educate students regarding these theories and also to encourage them to explore these theories further. Moreover, this study guide explores a number of varying teaching methodologies, including the task-based teaching approach, as well as more communicative learning techniques. Thus these methodologies are combined in order to instruct the students in incorporating learner-centeredness in their practical teaching approaches. Furthermore, students are guided on planning and constructing different kinds of lessons plans and adapting them to their students' varying needs. In this approach, the study guide content also educates students on some elements of Krashen's natural approach to language teaching, by highlighting different teaching roles in different classroom situations, as well as making teacher-students aware of the concept of the affective filters that can adversely influence their learners' performance in the classroom.

Therefore, the TEFLA SLP aims to provide a broad overview of the teaching practice involved in EFLT and it incorporates a number of different theories in its instruction. Finally, the aim appears to be on educating students in specific classroom methodologies, and it also encourages them to reflect on their own teaching practices, as well as exploring other resources and sources of teaching development.

2.5. Conclusion
This chapter described the theoretical framework that is, the socio-cultural and connectivist theories of learning in an educational environment which is increasingly embracing digital tools of course delivery and learning spaces. This chapter also reviewed the relevant literature on English foreign-language learning and teaching, as well as models related to the training of foreign language teachers, the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills and delivery of language teacher-training programmes in a distance education environment. Then the use of CMC, with a focus on MOOCs and webinars, particularly in the context of English foreign-language learning and teacher-training in an open distance learning context, was explored. Finally, this chapter outlined the SLPs offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, in particular the content and delivery of the TEFLA programme.

Consequently, the next chapter will describe the research design and methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 3 -- Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the research design and methodology employed in this case study. Reasons are provided for choosing a case study as a
qualitative method of conducting research and the population and sampling of the research participants are identified. Furthermore, the data collection and data analysis are outlined. Finally, the reliability and validity of the research, as well as the ethical clearance for this study, are discussed.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study, taking the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) programme, offered at UNISA, an ODL (Open Distance Learning) university, as a case study, this study seeks to investigate the following research questions:

1. How effective are MOOCs, as online additional resources for enhancing EFL teaching and learning?
2. How effective are webinars, as online tools for enhancing EFL teacher-training?
3. What guidelines can inform the effective use of online tools to enhance EFL teacher-training in an Open Distance Learning context?

With these research questions in mind, the reasons for employing a case study methodology of research will be substantiated in the next section.

3.2. Research Design and Methodology

3.2.1. A Case Study

According to Huysamen (1996: 168)

The term *case study* pertains to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis (often only one), such as an individual, group or institution, are studied intensively, and not to some or other technique which is applied. Whereas hypothesis-testing research deals with the general and the regular, case studies are directed at the understanding of the uniqueness and the idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity. Usually its objective is to so investigate the dynamics of some single bounded system, typically of a social nature..."

Furthermore, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003: 93) propose that the case study as a method of research is valuable as an empirical investigation into a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. The authors
suggest that case studies are based on the research of processes in response to "how?" research questions. They suggest a combination of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory studies as strategies to employ in research through case studies (Saunders et al., 2003: 96-98).

With this in mind, this research study will follow the exploratory case study methodology as an approach as defined by the Writing Studio at the Colorado State University (Becker, B., Dawson, P., Devine, K., Hannum, C., Hill, S., Leydens, J., Matuskevich, D., Traver, C. and Palmquist, M., 1993-2012: 1), that is, the collection and study of data that tells us something about a specific group, which often includes information provided on the participants, by the participants themselves. A case study is classified as qualitative and descriptive research that focuses on a very specific issue within a very specific group in a specific context. Thus, a case study does not aim to draw conclusions that are generalizable.

In addition, according to Yin (1984: 23), the case study research method is an empirical enquiry into a contemporary phenomenon within an existing context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

Thus, the case study method of research is deemed as appropriate in the context of this particular research proposal, as it questions, explores and assesses the effectiveness of utilising MOOCs and webinars as complementary tools of learning in an EFL teacher training course at a distance learning institution. Furthermore, due to the small number of students registered at any one time for this programme (between 3 and 15), this research is qualitative, that is, the data are interpreted holistically, and it does not propose for the conclusions to be quantified (Becker et al. 1993-2012: 9).

3.2.2. Qualitative Research
Calfee and Sperling (2010: 8) draw a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research in that quantitative approaches to research often originate from the aim to test certain hypotheses in order to make predictions through processes of deduction concerning people and situations. On the other hand, qualitative approaches to research aim to explore, discover and generate theories and hypotheses, often through processes of induction. By 'induction' is meant "the inference of a general law from particular instances" (Oxford Dictionaries Language Matters, 2015).

Von Kardorff (in Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke, (translated by Jenner) 2004:139-140) summarises the features of qualitative research as follows:

1. Under normative aspects, evaluation research is value-bound research [and]... it should embrace such democratic values as transparency, participation, the emphasis on free will, social responsibility, rectitude and a humanistic perspective. At any rate, it should declare and publish the values that underlie its work.

2. If one understands social reality as a social construct, the 'addressees' of measures are not only 'objects' reacting to interventions, but acting subjects who incorporate interventions in their environment into their everyday theories, interpret them in particular ways and develop meaningful strategies (creative reinterpretations, resistance, ironic submission, counter-proposals, and so on) in dealing with them.

3. For his reason, evaluation research - and in practice it has no alternative – must be carried out as a process of communicative debate... [It] inevitably plays an active role in changes; it therefore acts as a 'change agent'... the results of evaluation then tend to take on the character of reflexive and orientational, rather than technical and instrumental, information.

4. The way in which evaluation research understands reality is basically constructivist... [by which is meant that] Social reality is understood as the result of communicatively and interactively negotiated structures that are realized in meaning patterns, discourses, social representations and action patterns. The reflexive and ongoing nature of reality is demonstrated in qualitative evaluation research from the point of view of the different roles and positions of participants. Here the scientific interpretation itself becomes part of the reconstructive discovery and creation of that social reality which is the object of change brought about by the measure being evaluated. In short – qualitative evaluation research pursues the 'interpretive paradigm' (Wilson 1970). (sic)
This means that this research project itself can be viewed as being informed by the scope of the Connectivist and Socio-cultural Theories, as explored in Chapter 2 of this paper. By that is meant that the researcher is making use of connectivism in order to form connections to sources of knowledge (i.e. the research to be conducted) in order to construct strategies formed through a process of exploration and analysis of data. Furthermore, the researcher is required to act as a constructor of social reality as a result of interactively negotiating meaning patterns and social action patterns in terms of the socio-cultural theory. Therefore, the researcher navigates connections to knowledge through connectivism, thus constructing meaning and creating knowledge. In addition, the researcher works within a social reality and makes use of social (educational) artefacts in order to establish patterns of meaning that can, in turn, inform and induce social action patterns.

Flick (in Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke, 2004: 147) describes the aim of case studies as qualitative research designs as the accurate account, interpretation and reconstruction of a case or scenario. Flick further proposes that the term 'case' can be broadly understood to include people, social communities, institutions and corporations. He emphasises that it is important to identify a case that is relevant for the research question(s), as well as to clarify the elements belonging to the case (Flick, 2004, in Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke, 2004: 147).

Thus, apropos of the aim of this study to investigate the effectiveness of employing new aspects of online course delivery as teaching methodology for the TEFLA course, a Short Learning Programme (SLP), offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA; that these aspects of online course delivery should utilise e-learning and CMC by incorporating synchronous and asynchronous digital teaching and learning tools, in the shape of Open Distance Learning (ODLs) sources such as MOOCs (Mass Open Online Courses), as examples of asynchronous learning, as well as webinars (synchronous learning); this research can be regarded as such an investigation into a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context.
Withal, these research aims pertain to such a limited number of units of analysis in the milieu of a single programme at one specific institution, which are to be studied intensively (Huysamen, 1996: 168). Contrary to hypothesis-testing research, with quantifiable results, this study is directed at the understanding of the uniqueness and the idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity (Huysamen, 1996: 168). Moreover, since this research is framed by the challenges posed by the world trend toward online learning, and its aim is to question the effectiveness of incorporating MOOCs and webinars as appropriate online tools in an attempt to enhance the pedagogical methodology of a TEFLA programme in an Open Distance Learning (ODL) context, the case study method of research is deemed as an appropriate qualitative method of investigation.

This ties in with the aims of this case study, as previously mentioned. In order to reach these practical judgements by means of analysis and for the purpose of formulating constructive conclusions and recommendations for the aim to be useful and intelligent, the population and sampling of this case study will be described in the next section.

3.2.3. Population and Sampling

Simon and Goes (2012) propose that "A population is the entire group of individuals or items that share one or more characteristics from which data can be gathered and analyzed. A sample is a subset of the population." For this study the purposeful sampling method, where sampling can be chosen according to the convenience and relevance to the purpose of the case study (TESOL, 2014), was employed. Therefore, sampling was obtained from the population of students registered for the TEFLA Short Learning Programme at UNISA during Semester 2 of 2014, and Semester 1 of 2015.

In this case, purposeful sampling consisted of only the students who were registered, and who had provided their consent, for the TEFLA programme.
at UNISA during semester 2 of 2014 and semester 1 of 2015. In light of the research aims of this study, this sampling method was appropriate as it focused on the purpose of the study, as it pertained to assessing the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional learning tools, for this particular course. Although the sampling did not propose to render the findings generalizable, it did provide a sufficient scope for analysis in the context of the study, ensuring the relevance of the research findings for the particular reach and context of this case study.

### 3.2.4. Data collection

According to James (2007: 69-70) qualitative data collection methods include interviews with participants, observations, reflective journals, as well as the collection of relevant documents. Such documents may include student work (James, 2007: 70) and, as the aim here was a holistic study aiming to assess the effectiveness of introducing MOOCs and webinars as teaching methodology into the distance learning context of delivering a TEFLA course to teacher students, data collection consisted of documents in the form of students' work. Thus, the emphasis of this particular study was the collection of data through students' responses to assessment questions particularly pertaining to the usefulness of these additional digital tools of learning in the form of their written work, that is, their Portfolios of Evidence. Furthermore, registration-, participation-, questions- and survey reports generated by the webinar hosting site were also analysed in order to establish the use and effectiveness of this synchronous learning tool.

Duffy (in Bell, 1999: 106-107) outlines two approaches to collecting documents for analysis, namely the 'source oriented approach' and the 'problem-oriented approach'. In the first approach, the researcher would be guided by the sources in order to generate research aims and questions and therefore "would not bring predetermined questions to the sources but would be led by the material they contain" (ibid.). On the other hand, the "problem-oriented approach"... involves formulating questions by reading secondary sources, reading what has already been discovered about the
subject and establishing the focus of the study before going to the relevant *primary sources...*" (ibid.).

Moreover, Duffy (in Bell, 1999: 108) explains that "Primary sources are those which came into existence in the period under research..." and that "Secondary sources are interpretations of events of that period based on primary resources". In other words, most researchers would study andanalyse both primary- and secondary sources in order to represent a complete delineation of the case in question. He further explains, and this is of particular relevance to this study, that "Primary sources can in turn be divided into two categories. *Deliberate sources* [which] are produced for the attention of future researchers... They involve a deliberate attempt to preserve evidence for the future..." (Lehmann and Mehrens, 1971: 24). Moreover, Duffy (in Bell, 1999: 109) also identifies "*Inadvertent sources* [which] are used by the researcher for some purpose other than that for which they were originally intended".

Duffy (in Bell, 1999: 108) further points out that "'Document' is a general term for an impression left on a physical object by a human being" and that "the most common kind of documents in educational research are written as printed sources...".

Thus, this study focused on printed documents that can be classified as *deliberate sources* in the form of registration-, participation-, questions- and survey reports generated by the webinar hosting site after the webinar, as these documents were generated specifically for the purpose of research regarding the usefulness of this synchronous learning tool. On the other hand, students' responses to assessment questions particularly pertaining to the introduction of a MOOC, in the form of their written work, that is, their Portfolios of Evidence, can be regarded as *inadvertent sources*, because the primary aims of generating these responses were for summative assessment purposes. Therefore, these documents were *used by the researcher for some purpose other than that for which they were originally intended* (Duffy in Bell, 1999: 109).
Duffy (in Bell, 1999: 110) makes a final point about the nature of documents to be collected for research purposes, by discerning between 'witting' and 'unwitting' evidence as follows:

*Witting* evidence is the information which the original author of the documents wanted to impart. *Unwitting* evidence is everything else that can be learned from the document (Marwick, 1989: 216).

Therefore, the *deliberate sources* in the form of registration-, participation-, questions- and survey reports generated by the webinar hosting site after the webinar, can be regarded as *witting evidence*, as these contain information which the students wanted to impart, as these documents required opinions in response to certain questions. On the other hand, the *inadvertent sources*, that is, students' responses to assessment questions particularly pertaining to the introduction of a MOOC, in the form of their written work, can be regarded as *unwitting evidence*, because the primary aims of the students in generating these responses were for their summative assessment purposes.

In addition, the co-ordinators' reports for the TEFLA 2014, Semester 2 and the TEFLA 2015, Semester 1 programmes (see appendices 5 and 6) were also analysed as *inadvertent sources* that constitute *unwitting evidence*. The reason for this is that these reports offered valuable insight into the effectiveness of utilising a MOOC and a webinar as teaching methodology into the delivery of the programme in a distance learning environment. These reports, however, were not generated as deliberate sources and as witting evidence for the sole purposes of this study. The main aim of the compiler of these reports was to provide overall feedback to UNISA management on the general co-ordination of the programmes.

Therefore, when considering the research questions of this study, the following data were collected:

**3.2.4.1. The MOOCs**

The MOOC identified as appropriate in the context of the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, was offered by the
University of Oregon's Online English Language Center (sic), called "Shaping the Way We Teach English":

![Figure 7: Screen shot of University of Oregon MOOC landing page.](image)

Its landing page informs us that

**Shaping the Way We Teach English** is a video-based training product for English language educators. It has 14 modules (topics). The videos showcase classroom scenes from around the world and have an accompanying training manual plus additional readings.

The University of Oregon developed and produced the materials through funding from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of English Language Programs ©2007. All materials are free of charge and copyable for non-commercial educational use. (University of Oregon's American English Institute, 2013).

The course outline is attached as appendix 1 to this study.
Bearing in mind our criteria for an effective digital learning tool as discussed in 2.3.4.1, this MOOC was chosen as an enhancement to the existing pedagogical content knowledge included in the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA for the following reasons:

1. As a digital learning tool, it offered learner-teachers the opportunity to receive knowledge, experience the knowledge in a classroom environment (by means of video tutorials and real-life teaching situations), turn the knowledge into teaching skills (through teaching and classroom observation checklists) and, lastly, the opportunity to reflect on the usefulness of the knowledge by incorporating it into their own teaching practice.

2. This was not a tool that offered synchronous learning opportunities (please refer to the webinar section below).

3. This MOOC was a digital learning tool that offered asynchronous learning opportunities.

4. This MOOC encouraged autonomy and creativity, as it was self-paced and students did not have to complete all of the modules.

5. This MOOC offered students the opportunity to construct knowledge through connectivism and socio-culturalism, by learning to navigate the site as a learning space, as well as by viewing videos of teaching taking place in classrooms all over the world, which allowed students to become part of a global community of teachers.

6. This MOOC was learner-centred, as it offered students the opportunity to engage with multimedia content specifically relevant to their own teaching practice.

7. This MOOC was not time-specific and, therefore, offered ease of access (via an Internet connection) and convenience.

8. This MOOC was subject-specific to teachers of English as a foreign language and, thus, enhanced the current pedagogical methodology of teaching and learning.

It is evident, therefore, that the selected MOOC was a suitable additional source of pedagogical knowledge in order to enhance the learning
experience of teacher-learners on the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA. Its effectiveness is assessed in Chapter 4 of this study.

As part of the final assessment of the TEFLA 2014, S2 and TEFLA 2015, S1 students in an ODL context, in the form of a reflective question in the Teaching Portfolio of Evidence (refer to appendix 4); students were asked to reflect on their use of the suggested MOOC as an additional resource to facilitate their learning. As all registered students were required to submit the Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) as a final assessment, the written answers of all the registered TEFLA students (who had provided their consent) were collected. (Please refer to appendix 8 for students' consent forms.)

Originally, the MOOC prescribed for students was on Learningadvisor.com. However, students pointed out that this MOOC charged a fee of US$55. Therefore, a free, non-time specific MOOC was introduced instead, namely the Shaping the Way MOOC offered by The University of Oregon Online English Language Center (sic). (Please refer to appendix 1 for further details regarding this MOOC). The MOOC was intended to encompass asynchronous, autonomous learning activities in addition to the programme content offered in the TEFLA programme.

### 3.2.4.1.1. S2 of 2014

A total number of eleven students registered for the course during semester 2 of 2014. Of these, eight students submitted their PoE’s and four students provided their consent for their work to be analysed for the purposes of this study.

The following general challenges with the data collection should be noted:

- One of the students who submitted a PoE indicated that s/he did not register for the suggested MOOC, as it involved a fee of US$55. It should be noted that an e-mail was sent to all students, advising them of the free and non-time specific MOOC offered by The University of Oregon. In addition, an announcement was posted on the myUnisa site,
informing students of this change. It is evident, however, that this particular student did not read these messages with understanding.

- Another student plagiarised their entire PoE from various Internet resources and, therefore, did not provide responses specifically relevant to the PoE questions regarding the usefulness of the MOOC.
- In addition, one student did not address the question regarding the usefulness of the MOOC as an enhancement to the existing TEFLA study material.
- The remaining five students indicated in their answers that they found the suggested MOOC very helpful as an additional resource and that it enhanced the existing TEFLA study material.

3.2.4.1.2. S1 of 2015

As in semester 2 of 2014, a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) was suggested as an additional resource of learning in semester 1 of 2015. During the latter semester, the free, non-time specific MOOC, namely the Shaping the Way MOOC offered by The University of Oregon Online English Language Center (sic) was suggested as an additional resource from the start of the semester. (Please refer to appendix 1 for further details regarding this MOOC). Once again, the MOOC was intended to encompass asynchronous, autonomous learning activities in addition to the programme content offered in the TEFLA programme.

A total number of eleven students registered for the course during semester 1 of 2015. Of these, five students submitted their PoE’s and three of these students provided their consent for their work to be analysed for the purposes of this study.

The following general challenges with the data collection should also be noted:

1. Two students plagiarised their entire PoE from Internet resources and did not make much sense. In addition, these students then copied each other's work for final submission, so this data is not coherent enough for analysis regarding the usefulness of the MOOC.
2. One student did not address the question regarding the usefulness of the MOOC as an enhancement to the existing TEFLA study material. Instead, this student enrolled in a time-specific MOOC offered by Coursera. Furthermore, this particular student did not grant their consent for their work to be included in this study.

3. The remaining two students indicated in their answers that they found the suggested MOOC very helpful as an additional resource and that it enhanced the existing TEFLA study material.

3.2.4.1.3. **Co-ordinator's reports**

The co-ordinator's reports for both semesters were utilised as data for reflection and assessment of the effectiveness of the use of the MOOC in the TEFLA short learning programme. Specifically, this research took into account the co-ordinator's comments pertaining to the following questions:

a. Did students make use of the suggested MOOC?

b. Did students find the MOOC to be helpful as an additional resource of teaching practice methodology?

In the subsequent section, the data collection methodology for the research on the effectiveness of webinars as an additional resource to the TEFLA course will be discussed.

3.2.4.2. **The webinars**

It should be noted here that a video-conference could have offered the ideal digital tool for synchronous learning in a distance-learning environment. However, it would have involved a number of logistical challenges in the milieu of this particular TEFLA teacher-learner programme. Firstly, the physical facilities required for a video-conference would only have been available during South African working hours. This posed a problem for students who worked during that time and studied after hours and, in addition, many of the students who registered for this course lived in other countries, which caused logistical challenges related to time differences. Furthermore, as the co-ordinator and an outsourced contracted employee, the researcher also had to manage logistical constraints posed by travelling...
distance, as well as time constraints. Therefore, a webinar was chosen, as it would take place online, could be scheduled on a Saturday, and only required an online connection that could be accessed by any digital device from anywhere in the world.

However, at the time of conducting this research, the UNISA online learning tool, myUnisa, did not offer the facility to host webinars. Consequently, an independent webinar hosting site was used, on a free trial basis, to provide the webinar. This hosting site is called GoToWebinar:

![GoToWebinar Landing Page]

Figure 8: Screen shot of the GoToWebinar landing page.

A webinar is an online workshop or seminar, accessed via an Internet connection, scheduled to take place at a specific time. Due to its online nature, students can access and participate in the webinar using their personal computer, laptop or other mobile device, from anywhere. A webinar allows for interaction with a tutor by means of questions posted in a dialogue box during the webinar. This allows the tutor to address concerns and questions of the students synchronously. It also allows for students to answer each other's questions and address concerns that may arise during the webinar. Furthermore, a PowerPoint presentation, on the presenter's
screen, can be seen by students during the webinar. A recording of the webinar is also made available to students for a one-month period after completion of the webinar. Furthermore, the webinar generates reports on registration and attendance, as well as surveys and questionnaires compiled by the presenter and completed by the participants.

Thus, webinars, hosted by the course co-ordinator as a learning space for guiding students on the construction of their Teaching Portfolios of Evidence for the TEFLA 2014, S2 and TEFLA 2015, S1, also served as sources of data. Surveys were conducted on the usefulness of the webinars, and attendance and registration reports, generated by the webinar hosting site, were collected (please refer to appendix 3.1 – 3.7). Furthermore, the webinars were recorded and reports generated on the types of questions generated by students on the content of the webinars (recordings are available upon request, as the file sizes are too large to enclose here).

3.2.4.2.1. S2 of 2014

Registration and Attendance

The Registration and Attendee reports generated after the webinar (please refer to appendices 2.1. and 2.2.) indicate that all 11 students registered for the TEFLA 2014 S2 programme also registered for the webinar. However, only 9 of the registered participants attended the webinar. It is not clear why two of the registered students did not attend the webinar. There were no students who indicated that they did not have access to the Internet.

Interactivity and Participation

During the webinar, participants could hear the co-ordinator's voice and could see the co-ordinator's computer screen. Instruction took place with the use of a PowerPoint presentation (please refer to appendix 2.1.), of which slides could be seen by the participants. Attendees could type questions and comments into a text box, which could be seen by the co-ordinator. However, the co-ordinator was the only person on the webinar whose voice could be heard. The co-ordinator then responded to questions
and comments either verbally, or by typing into the text box with questions and comments that could be seen by all participants.

The attendee report (please see appendix 3.2.) contains questions, answers and comments made by participants. This report clearly illustrates that some participants had difficulties in seeing the co-ordinator's screen at times and there were also technical difficulties experienced by some of the participants. At times, participants could not hear the co-ordinator's voice; they could not see the co-ordinator's screen; and they sometimes lost Internet connection to the webinar. These are technical difficulties that need to be addressed. However, due to the webinar being hosted by an outsourced tool, the co-ordinator did not have any control over these technical challenges. Furthermore, Internet connections tend to be a challenge in South Africa at times and this is not something that is easily resolved. Moreover, participants accessed the webinar by using various devices (please refer to the attendee report in appendix 3.2.) and these devices have a range of functionalities that are unpredictable in their compatibility with the technical requirements of attending a webinar.

Survey Questions and Responses

After the webinar, participants were given the option of completing an online survey regarding the usefulness of the webinar session. Of the 9 participants in the webinar, 5 of the students completed the survey.

3.2.4.2.2. S1 of 2015

As in TEFLA 2014 S2, a webinar was scheduled during S1 of 2015 with the aim of instructing learners on how to compile their Portfolios of Evidence as a summative assessment task. Once again, the webinar was intended to encompass synchronous, interactive learning activities in addition to the programme content offered in the TEFLA programme. Students' registration, attendance, participation and survey responses generated by the webinar hosting site were collected as data for this research study.

Registration and Attendance
Of the 11 students registered for TEFLA 2015 S1, 5 students registered for the webinar and 2 students attended the webinar. One of the registrants logged on to the webinar almost an hour before it was due to start and then became tired of waiting for the rest of the registrants and the facilitator and, thus, did not attend the webinar. One other student had difficulty in accessing the webinar due to Internet connection issues. It is not clear why the third student did not attend the webinar, even though they registered for it.

**Interactivity and Participation**

Interactivity and participation during this webinar was conducted in the same manner as with the webinar scheduled during TEFLA 2014 S2.

**Survey Questions and Responses**

After the webinar, participants were once again given the option of completing an online survey regarding the usefulness of the webinar session. Of the 2 participants in the webinar, both of the students completed the survey. For the complete report, please refer to the webinar survey report in appendix 3.6.

3.2.4.2.3. Co-ordinator's reports

The co-ordinator's feedback reports for Semester 2 of 2014 and for Semester 1 of 2015 also served as data for analysis by addressing the following questions:

a. Did the students actively engage in the webinar session and in what way?
b. What challenges did the students encounter in making use of the webinar?
c. Overall, how effective was the webinar in enhancing the TEFLA programme?

3.2.5. Data Analysis
Becker et al. (1993-2012: 9) explain that the information collected in case studies can be analysed either holistically or through coding. They further expound that "Holistic analysis does not attempt to break the evidence into parts, but rather to draw conclusions based on the text as a whole." Furthermore, they remind us that case study reports are descriptive and strive to make evident the connections between the data and the conclusions. Furthermore, Kawulich (2004: 97) cites Bernard's approach to data analysis in the shape of hermeneutics or interpretive analysis, which would seem most appropriate for the aims of this research study. Analysis and interpretation of data in case studies may, after all, be considered as the exploratory aspect of this type of research and may lead to hypothesis generation during the analysis of the research (Saunders, et al., 2003: 391).

Therefore, the data collected was analysed holistically in order to interpret the data and draw conclusions that may be useful in assessing the effectiveness of introducing MOOCs and webinars as additional tools of learning in an ODL context. Therefore, the students' written responses were perused and reflected upon in terms of whether they (the students) found these additional tools of learning useful and effective, or not. Furthermore, the students' level of engagement with the suggested digital tools of learning were considered and reflected upon, as well as ease of use and convenience. Students' abilities to access knowledge through connectivism and socio-culturalism were deliberated upon in the conclusions and recommendations (chapter 5) of this study.

Therefore, the data analysis involved grouping and categorising that is, forming new categories and continually refining and generating new categories of the data collected from the MOOCs, webinars and co-ordinator's reports at each phase of the analysis (Silverman, 2000: 125). More specifically, the case study itself became a method for the data analysis where data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously (Dey, 1993: 265).
As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) course is a Short Learning Programme (SLP) offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA and is a distance-learning programme. The duration of the course spans one semester and, therefore, two courses are offered per academic year.

The aim of the course is to teach students who want to become EFL teachers, thus the course comprises two modules: a theoretical component (TEFL01-6), which focuses on the theoretical aspects of English grammar; and a practical component (TEFL02-8).

**TEFLA2014 Semester 2:**

The course work, including the study guides and tutorial letters (containing general and specific information regarding the course, as well as assignment- and portfolio questions) was posted on the *myUnisa* TEFLA digital learning tool. The aim here was a learner-centred approach, in which student autonomy could be fostered. As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, Broady (1993: 49-62), as well as Haworth and Parker (1993: 78-94) emphasise the importance of autonomy in the distance-learning language learner-teacher. They explain that, ultimately, the learner-teacher in a distance-learning landscape needs to take responsibility for their own constructs of knowledge and experience, by making full use of the different sources of knowledge available to them. In return, however, models of delivery should provide different learning resources and tools in order to enable students to access the relevant study content easily and conveniently. These constructs of knowledge and experiences, and making use of different sources of knowledge available to students, also ties in with the connectivism and socio-cultural theories, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

In addition, students registered for this course could address enquiries, questions and requests to the course co-ordinator directly via e-mail, WhatsApp™ messages and posts on the *myUnisa* discussion forum. It should be noted that the methodology employed here was mostly asynchronous (formally) with synchronous learning aspects only taking
place informally through direct communication with the course co-ordinator through CMC (computer mediated communication), as indicated above.

Therefore, the design and delivery of the course in this format, places it firmly in White's (2013: 13) and Rumble's (2001) third-generation of programme delivery, as it involves multi-media and e-learning aspects in its delivery (please refer to figures 3 and 4 respectively). However, this study aims to establish whether this teaching methodology could further be enhanced by the introduction of a MOOC and a webinar as additional resources to the existing course. A more detailed discussion of the effectiveness of these digital tools will follow in the relevant subsequent sections.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, digital literacy in students is an important aspect of online learning in a distance-learning environment. Below is an example of an interaction on WhatsApp™ between a student on the TEFLA (2014, S2) programme and the co-ordinator of the programme:

7/18/2014 08:23: Student: Halo Rona, I'm a student at unisa. I'm a bit confused need your help, I've got my TEFL016 assignment in myunisa but now there is this part say I must check first to activity5 and answer the question that are to activity5, although the assignment have no activity5.
7/18/2014 08:25: Rona: Good morning, what is your name?
7/18/2014 08:27: Student: My name is _________
7/18/2014 08:28: Student: I'm so sorry to bother you so early in the morning
7/18/2014 08:30: Rona: No problem (Student) - I am pleased that you are already working on your assignment
7/18/2014 08:30: Student: Thanks
7/18/2014 08:31: Rona: The question refers to activity 5 in TEFL01-6 (the study guide)
7/18/2014 08:31: Rona: Please read the question again and then look for the activity in the study guide
7/18/2014 08:31: Rona: And then let me know when you have found it
7/18/2014 08:32: Student: OK, I will inform you just now thanks a lot
7/18/2014 08:32: Rona: Sure
7/18/2014 08:49: Student: this assignment say:: Read through activity5 in TEFL016 and answer the question set .......my problem is I see no activity 5 to my study guide that have a question to answer.
7/18/2014 08:51: Rona: Go to page 11 of TEFL01-06
7/18/2014 08:52: Rona: Do you see activity 5 there?
7/18/2014 08:53: Student: No I only got assignment, I've got no page 11 to what I have
7/18/2014 08:53: Rona: Do you have the study guides?
7/18/2014 08:53: Rona: They are on myUnisa
7/18/2014 08:54: Student: Ok let me go to myunisa to get the study guide, I'm sorry is my 1st time to study online
7/18/2014 08:55: Rona: Ok. You need to read the whole of the TUT letter very carefully, because it tells you about all of the sources that you need to work through.
7/18/2014 08:55: Student: I'm a bit stupid now and scared as well to fail or be behind with my studied
7/18/2014 08:56: Rona: Go to the additional resources page on myUnisa AFTER you have read everything in the TUT letter.
7/18/2014 08:57: Rona: You are not stupid. You just need to read the TUT letter very carefully to make sure that you understand what is involved in this course
7/18/2014 08:57: Student: Ok thanks
7/18/2014 08:57: Rona: Sure
7/18/2014 08:57: Rona: Once you have accessed all of the information, please let me know
7/18/2014 09:13: Student: I've got it! yeeaaaaaa thanks a million
7/18/2014 09:16: Rona: Wonderful!
This interaction clearly illustrates the difficulties that some students experience when navigating their way to information in an online environment. It does, however, also illustrate how effective communication via online tools can be in guiding students in developing their digital literacy skills.

Although the use of WhatsApp™ messaging is not the object of analysis in this study, the researcher does deem it relevant to mention it here, insofar as it establishes a background to the kind of challenges posed by technology in an open learning distance-education environment. It also serves to inform the specific aims of the study in that educators need to be cognisant of the issue of digital literacy when formulating teaching methodologies when designing programme delivery in an open distance-learning landscape.

**TEFLA 2015 SEMESTER 1**

As with TEFLA 2014 S2, the course content, including the study guides and tutorial letters (containing general and specific information regarding the course, as well as assignment- and portfolio questions) was posted on the myUnisa TEFLA digital learning portlet.

However, the UNISA policy regarding direct contact with outside contractors was amended at the end of 2014 and so, because the course co-ordinator was not a full-time employee of UNISA at that time, students could not address enquiries and questions directly to the course co-ordinator via e-mail and WhatsApp™ messages. Instead, students were required to post all of their questions, comments and concerns on the myUnisa discussion forums. Therefore, during this semester, almost all of the learning was asynchronous and not much synchronous activity was incorporated into the programme during the first semester of 2015.
Once again, during semester 1 of 2015, a MOOC was suggested as an additional resource of learning for students and a webinar was hosted in order to discuss the requirement of the Portfolios of Evidence with the students.

Thus, against this course background and pertaining to the usefulness of MOOCs and webinars in each instance, several questions, as shown below, were used as guidelines for the data analysis.

3.2.5.1. The MOOCs

Learners' answers to the reflective question in the Teaching Portfolio of Evidence (as part of the final assessment of the TEFLA students in an ODL context) were analysed, to ascertain the extent to which they found the MOOC helpful as an additional resource to facilitating their learning. Specifically, data were analysed using the following questions as guidelines:

a. How did students experience the MOOC? Was it useful or not?
b. Did students use the MOOC to enhance the TEFLA study material?
c. What particular benefit did the students derive from completing the MOOC?

Individual comments of students were considered as part of the exploratory aspect of the research.

In addition, the data from the co-ordinator's feedback reports for Semester 2 of 2014, as well as for Semester 1 of 2015 were analysed using the following questions as guidelines:

a. How did students use the suggested MOOC?
b. Did students experience the MOOC to be helpful as an additional resource of teaching practice methodology?

3.2.5.2. The Webinars
The purpose of the webinars, scheduled for the TEFLA Semester 2 of 2014 and Semester 1 of 2015 SLPs, was to provide more information and guidance on compiling the Teaching Portfolio of Evidence that served as a summative assessment at the end of each semester. Therefore, in keeping with Wang and Hsu's suggestions (2008: 186-187) as outlined in 2.3.4.2, the information presented was conceptual in that it focused on the construction of the PoE. It did not, therefore, aim to place a heavy cognitive load on participants.

Thus, bearing in mind our criteria for an effective digital learning tool as identified in Chapter 2, the usefulness of a webinar as an enhancement to the existing pedagogical content knowledge included in the TEFLA programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA was assessed according to the following criteria:

1. As a digital learning tool, it needed to offer learner-teachers the opportunity to receive the knowledge of compiling the PoE; experience the knowledge by means of a visual representation on-screen; turn the knowledge into practical application by compiling their PoE's accordingly; and, lastly, the opportunity to reflect on the usefulness of the knowledge by completing surveys and questionnaires after the webinar.

2. As a digital tool, it had to offer synchronous learning opportunities.

3. It also needed to offer asynchronous learning opportunities in order to enhance the value of the teaching.

4. It had to encourage autonomy and creativity.

5. The webinar needed to offer students the opportunity to construct knowledge through connectivism and socio-culturalism, by learning to navigate the site as a learning space, as well as posting questions and comments that could be viewed by other participants.

6. The webinar had to be learner-centred, and offer students the opportunity to engage with the facilitator and fellow-students.

7. The webinar had to be scheduled on a Saturday in order to
accommodate learners who were working during office hours. In addition, it needed to offer ease of access (via an Internet connection) and convenience.

8. The webinar had to be subject-specific (in terms of assessment requirements) to teachers of English as a foreign language in order to enhance the existing pedagogical methodology of teaching and learning.

Attendance and registration reports generated by the webinar hosting site were analysed to determine the usefulness of the webinar, paying particular attention to the students' comments and suggestions. The following questions were used as guidelines:

a. Did the students actively engage in the webinar session and in what way?
b. What challenges did the students encounter in making use of the webinar?
c. Overall, how effective was the webinar in enhancing the TEFLA programme?

In addition, data from the co-ordinator's feedback reports for Semester 2 of 2014, as well as for Semester 1 of 2015 were analysed using the following questions as guidelines:

a. Did the students actively engage in the webinar session and in what way?
b. What challenges did the students encounter in making use of the webinar?
c. Overall, how effective was the webinar in enhancing the TEFLA programme?

Again, the analysis was exploratory in that it aimed to deduce the usefulness of this learning space as a synchronous learning activity.

Thus, through reflexive analysis and assessment of the students' work, as well as the co-ordinator's reports for the periods mentioned above; through
a reflection on and assessment of the effectiveness of the use of digital tools in the TEFLA short learning programme; a number of guidelines were composed in order to inform the delivery of an effective EFL teaching programme in Open Distance Learning contexts through CMC.

3.3. Reliability and Validity

Unlike in quantitative research, the terms reliability and validity in qualitative research are not clearly and distinctively defined and many researchers seem to approach these terms from different perspectives. A definition will be attempted for these terms respectively, as well as the measures that may be employed to test reliability and validity in qualitative research, whereupon the reliability and validity of this case study will be substantiated.

Reliability

Simon and Goes (n.d.) approach reliability in qualitative research from the perspective of the dependability and credibility of the research. According to these authors, the dependability and credibility (or reliability) indicates the accuracy of interpretation of the data under analysis. The accuracy of interpretation can be achieved by verifying participants’ answers, response uniformity, and within method triangulation (Casey & Murphy, 2009). On the other hand, Golafshani (2003: 601) regards reliability in qualitative research as synonymous with quality. In order to achieve quality in the research study, this author emphasises the importance of trustworthiness. It seems, therefore that the reliability of the research is dependent on the dependability, credibility and trustworthiness of the research. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 316) "Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability;]" Furthermore, Patton (2002) postulates reliability can be regarded a result of the validity in a study.
Validity

Simon and Goes (n.d.) liken validity to researcher objectivity during the data analysis process, which can be achieved through transparency and the ability to maintain neutrality. Golafshani (2003) proposes the need for "rigor" in terms of validity in qualitative research, which points to confidence in the findings of the research. Therefore, one may surmise that the validity of the research study should be measured in terms of how objective and neutral the findings of the research are, in order to establish confidence and credibility in the analysis of the findings. Patton (2002) advocates the use of triangulation in order to achieve reliability and validity in qualitative research. Triangulation is understood as “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell and Miller, 2000: 126).

Golafshani summarises it thus:

Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm. It is also through this association that the way to achieve validity and reliability of a research get affected from the qualitative researchers’ perspectives which are to eliminate bias and increase the researcher’s truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon (Denzin, 1978) using triangulation.

In this case study, attempts to attain reliability were made through verifying participants' answers by analysing only what was written down as answers related to the usefulness of the MOOCs in their summative assessments at the culmination of the course. Students' responses were included in the analysis as they were written and no attempts were made to alter the responses in any way. Furthermore, objectivity was maintained by representing the data as is, that is, students' answers were represented as they were submitted. Thus, measures were put in place to ensure that the analysis is unbiased, trustworthy and dependable.

In addition, students' responses to the questionnaires generated after the webinars were presented in the study unaltered. Therefore, the reader has
direct access to the participants' unaltered responses, as much as the researcher does. Thus, measures were put in place to ensure transparency. In this manner, participants' responses can be verified and response uniformity can be assessed by observers who were not involved with the researcher.

Validity was also maintained through triangulation. Triangulation was employed by means of convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in the study. The researcher was simply interested in finding out what themes and categories may emerge from the participants' responses and so the different sources of information analysed included students' own responses to assessments, survey questionnaires, as well as the co-ordinator's reports submitted at the end of each semester during the research period. Furthermore, the researcher had no aim of testing any hypotheses and therefore was not looking for any particular outcome to the research. On the contrary, the aim of the research was simply to establish the usefulness of incorporating MOOCs and webinars as additional resources to the TEFLA SLP at UNISA. As such, this case study, with its findings, conclusions and recommendations, was investigative in nature and no foregone conclusions were anticipated. Therefore, the reliability and validity of the study has been established.

3.4. Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance was obtained from UNISA and the study adheres to the guidelines provided by the UNISA College of Human Sciences summary sheet for postgraduate students. Furthermore, students’ consent was sought, thus only documents submitted by students who provided their consent were analysed and students’ anonymity was retained. The ethical clearance certificate and consent forms are included in appendices 7 and 8.

3.5. Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted in this study, particularly the qualitative nature and methodology employed being that of a case study.
The population and sampling was also discussed. The data collection and data analysis processes were outlined and justified. Data were collected from students’ assignments, students’ reflections in the questionnaire and the coordinator’s reports. Finally, the chapter discussed the measures put in place to ensure the validity and reliability in this study as well as the limitations of the study. Validity and reliability were achieved through the use of authentic data and triangulation. Ethical clearance was also obtained in accordance with the regulations stipulated by the College of Human sciences at UNISA and consent forms are included in the Appendices of this study.

This dissertation now turns its focus towards a discussion of the analysis and findings of the case study, which will be represented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 – Discussion and Analysis of Findings

4.1. Introduction
The purpose of this chapter is to peruse and analyse the findings obtained during the case study. The discussion is informed by the research questions, formulated in Chapter 1 as follows:

Taking the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) programme, offered at UNISA, an ODL (Open Distance Learning) university, as a case study, this study seeks to investigate the following research questions:

1. How effective are MOOCs, as online additional resources for enhancing EFL teaching and learning?
2. How effective are webinars, as online tools for enhancing EFL teacher-training?
3. What guidelines can inform the effective use of online tools to enhance EFL teacher-training in an Open Distance Learning context?

The analysis will commence with the findings on the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional sources of knowledge in the TEFLA SLP. The effectiveness of MOOCs will be addressed first, by analysing students' reflections in their final assessments, as well as the co-ordinator's reports for the two semesters under review. Subsequently, the effectiveness of the webinars will also be analysed according to the same structure. The overall effectiveness of the MOOCs and webinars will then be ascertained in their respective sections. This chapter will close with a conclusion that also introduces the last chapter of this study.

Therefore, this discussion will now turn to an analysis of the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional resources in an online learner-teacher language course at a distance-education institution.

4.2. Findings on the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars

4.2.1. The MOOCs
Students' responses to PoE (Portfolio of Evidence) questions regarding the usefulness of taking the *Shaping the Way We Teach* MOOC, as mentioned in Chapter 3, will thus be analysed here.

4.2.1.1. Students' reflections: S2 of 2014

With reference to the students’ experiences of the usefulness of the suggested MOOC, the data were analysed using the research questions stated in Chapter 3 as guidelines:

Individual comments of students were considered as part of the exploratory aspect of the research. Ergo, this study now turns to individual students' responses regarding the usefulness of the MOOC as an additional resource to enhance the existing TEFLA study material.

The first respondent's answer, Student A, is taken directly from the final marked PoE. Although it is evident that this student did not make full use of the suggested MOOC and, furthermore, that s/he did not fully address the requirements of the question, it is nonetheless interesting to note that s/he did make use of additional online resources. The student states that s/he found the course content daunting and that s/he had some challenges regarding their English writing proficiency, but that the online resources helped in improving their individual writing skills, as well as their understanding of teaching. In addition, *Student A* found online resources helpful as sources of teaching materials. The students also engaged in online discussion forums with other ESL teachers, thus becoming part of an online socio-cultural group and, in so doing, utilising the socio-cultural group for further development of their own teaching practice.

*Student A:*
Although the student did not make use of the suggested MOOC to a noticeable extent, s/he did find other online sources of knowledge and, therefore, one may deduce that the connectivism theory can be applied here. By the course co-ordinator suggesting one additional resource, the student applied their own searching skills and identified further resources as an enhancement of their own teaching and writing skills, as well as resources for teaching material to use in the classroom. Thus, the student formed their own connections to sources of knowledge.

Furthermore, the student's own initiative in joining online discussion forums relevant to ESL teaching points to the interactivity in a socio-cultural group as proposed by the socio-cultural theory. By becoming part of this socio-cultural group, the student made use of social constructs of meaning, through the participation in and creation of a socio-cultural artefact (the discussion forum) in order to enhance their own learning process.

Student B's response, indicates that s/he did not make use of the suggest University of Oregon MOOC. Nonetheless, Student B, much like Student A,
found other digital sources of learning based on their own initiative, indicating the connectivism and socio-cultural theories at work, once again.

**Student B:**

![TEACHING IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES](image)

The OERs mentioned by both Students A and B were also introduced as additional sources of information to the existing TEFLA study material. However, these sources are not directly relevant to this study.

This student makes particular mention of global participants providing "insightful discussions", which one can deduce led to valuable insights for the students into their own teaching practice. Student B's identification of a global community of learners in the same discipline ties in with the socio-cultural theory of learning, in that the MOOC served as a socio-cultural artefact, as well as a socio-cultural community, within which the participating student found meaningful knowledge to apply in their own teaching practice. Unfortunately, this student's response is not comprehensive enough to ascertain in what specific ways these online sources provided insights or encouragement or useful classroom material.

In their response to the PoE question, Student C fails entirely to mention the suggested MOOC as an additional source of knowledge and learning. Notwithstanding, s/he does make mention of online learning resources that s/he shares with their learners during class. Specific mention is made of videos, posters and charts, pictures and other activities that are used as additional teaching materials and sources of knowledge.

**Student C:**
Although the student did not specifically make use of the suggested MOOC, there is evidence here of sourcing online learning materials as an individual initiative, indicating some level of connectivism in their linking to sources of knowledge by utilising digital tools of learning.

Of the students registered for Semester 2 of 2014 who granted their consent for analysis of their work for the purposes of this study, Student D's response is most insightful when regarded in light of the usefulness of the suggested MOOC. This respondent makes specific mention of the videos that are available on the University of Oregon MOOC, and s/he states that this helped them to place the TEFLA study material within a classroom context. Furthermore, the student gleaned valuable teaching methodologies in practice regarding the four essential skills of language learning and, in addition, s/he was made aware of the scope of EFL teaching and learning in a global context.

Student D:
It is therefore evident that this student employed meta-cognitive skills in order to, not only employ connectivism in their access to the relevant digital sources, but that s/he could also place the sources of knowledge in a socio-cultural context of the EFL landscape. Furthermore, one may deduce that
this student could access the knowledge (received knowledge) and apply it in their own methodology of teaching (experiential knowledge).

4.2.1.2. Students' reflections: S1 of 2015

As in semester 2 of 2014, a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) was suggested as an additional resource of learning in semester 1 of 2015. During the latter semester, the free, non-time specific MOOC, namely the Shaping the Way MOOC offered by The University of Oregon Online English Language Center (sic) was suggested as an additional resource from the start of the semester.

This section of the analysis now turns to individual students' responses regarding the usefulness of the MOOC as an additional resource to enhance the existing TEFLA study material.

Student E:

2. TEACHING IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

MOOC and OERS

There are five MOOC which are beneficial to classroom situation. They are,

a) Classroom management
b) Language in context
c) Integrated skills
d) Pairs and Groups
e) Learner feedback

This five summarize what should take place in a single contact period with learners.

you need to explain here how the MOOC helped you develop your teaching skills

Student E’s response indicates that the student either did not understand the question, or experienced difficulties when attempting to respond to the PoE question. Unfortunately, this was one of the students who plagiarised their PoE answers from Internet sources. In addition, the student's responses to the relevant MOOC questions were incoherent and nonsensical and did not
bear any relevance whatsoever on the question regarding the effectiveness of the MOOC.

*Student F:*

As indicated by the response below, *Student F* utilised the suggested MOOC successfully and incorporated the teaching practice shown in the online videos into their own teaching practice.

---

I also registered for the suggested MOOC (University of Oregon Online English Language Centre). This course gave me the opportunity to observe real teachers in action and hear their views on teaching practice. The teachers featured in the videos are all from different teaching environments around the world. Most of them do not speak English as a first language and this gave me the assurance that my accent does not prevent me from teaching English. I realise that there can be no replacement for actual teaching in a classroom, but the video material in this MOOC provided me with a very good alternative. When I eventually did my practical sessions, I was able to draw on the information I received through this course and were much more confident because of this. thank you for this valuable feedback

This respondent was motivated by the fact that so many of the TEFL teachers in the videos were not native speakers of English themselves and this reassured *Student F* regarding their own ability to teach in this discipline. Moreover, this respondent found the video material a valuable substitute for face-to-face interaction in a classroom environment, and the respondent "could draw in the information... received through this course and were (sic) much more confident because of this." Therefore, it is evident that the suggested MOOC enhanced the course material (offered as part of the TEFLA course), for this particular student.
The addition of video material makes the MOOC a very valuable resource for trainee teachers. It illustrates the dynamics of the teaching environment much better than words alone can do. Because the videos are selected to go with specific modules, they are relevant to the content being presented. They can also be viewed whenever needed. The guided observation, reflection tasks and narrative ensure that the focus of the students is directed towards aspects that are applicable to the specific video. The value of this method is not only in studying the material presented, but also in the practice of these techniques themselves. This becomes evident in the modules on Peer Observations and Reflective Teaching, where the professional development of teachers and teaching practice is the focus.

*Student F* also indicated that s/he found the fact that the MOOC video material was available in a manner that was not time-specific convenient and that s/he could refer back to the videos in their own time. Moreover, the respondent found the teaching methodology involved in the offering of the MOOC as insightful and relevant to their own teaching practice. Therefore, as an asynchronous tool of learning, this respondent found the MOOC valuable as a replacement (at least in part) of person-to-person teaching, which is absent due to the distance-learning milieu of the TEFLA course.

*Student G:*

1a) Yes I did find the suggested MOOC by the University of Oregon useful in my teaching practice.
The aspect of the MOOC that I found most useful is the: The Online English Language Center. “A List of Supplementary Web-Based Readings” It gave me so many ideas and support in my teaching practice and I will continue to make use of it in future. An example is when I made use of “Module 02- Language Awareness” on “How to Teach Phrasal Verbs. They gave clear explanations and made it much easier for me to teach Phrasal Verbs.

Another module that I made use of was Module 05 “Student Correction during Class” by Kenneth Beare. I liked using the “selective correction” route.
The video-based product for English Language Educators “Shaping the way we teach English “consists of fourteen modules, divided into four categories. I could click on my computer and it gave me the opportunity to observe other teachers’ practices from around the world. I could stop the videos, rewind and view it again. This to me was really amazing and very useful.

The MOOC underlined the importance of elicitation and helped me keep students at the center of the learning process.
In this response, Student G highlights the usefulness of the suggested MOOC in their own teaching practice. As with Student F, this respondent also indicated that s/he found the ease of access to the videos convenient. More than any of the other respondents, Student G specifically indicates that the MOOC enhanced their own understanding and application of teaching methodology on the TEFL classroom. Therefore, this respondent clearly states how they turned received knowledge into experiential knowledge, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

Student G further emphatically states that the MOOC enhanced the UNISA TEFLA course material:

2a)
Yes the MOOC definitely enhanced the UNISA course material. After working through the course material, I watched some of the videos. It felt like a practical session, bringing the course material to life. It was useful to me seeing students and teachers at the same time. Listening to the correct pronunciation of words spoken by English Language speakers definitely complimented the course material on Pronunciation (unit 4 TEFL 01-6).”

Module 14 on “Reflective Teaching in” Teacher Development “enhances the course material (Unit 6 TEFL 02-8) It is one tool that can help teachers develop professionally. In the video you could see that the teachers were caring and open-minded and it was very useful to me, because it made me reflect on my own teaching goals.

The segment on “World-Classroom Management!” where teachers can share their classroom management techniques that worked for them, complimented the course material in (Unit 6.3 TEFL 02-8) I liked the idea that teachers shared their experiences on discipline issues.

In this response, Student G reflects on specific parts of the TEFLA course that were enhanced by the MOOC. Thus, it seems evident that this respondent could integrate the learning gleaned from the MOOC into their own reflection and teaching practice in the classroom. Thus, the MOOC emphatically enhanced the learning process for this particular respondent. Furthermore, as indicated in the continued response of Student G below, the suggested MOOC provided insight for the respondent on the wider scope of teaching methodologies available to the EFL teacher. Moreover, this
respondent found it useful to gain insight into EFL teaching from a global community of EFL teachers, in a similar manner to Student D.

The UNISA course material for TEFL02-8, Unit 3, Introduction to Methodology, only looked at two particular models: the PPP and the Task-based Learning model. In the Open Equal Free OER different teaching methods and tips are given and it definitely enhances the course material. Reading through the information I realized there are many teaching methods that can be utilized in one lesson and that many interlinks:

3a)
The MOOC by The University of Oregon definitely gave me a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in a global context. The videos in "Shaping the Way we Teach English" allowed me to go into the classrooms of fellow teachers from around the world. I came across a variety of cultures and different teaching methods and the importance of adopting your style and methods to fit in. The University of Oregon offered an "Access Teacher Development Online Program" to teachers. Although the last program ran in 2012, it still gave me an understanding on teaching English in a broader context and the importance of reaching out to teachers all over the world.

The series of short reports by the Center for Applied Linguistics covers subjects related to Language Learning and Cultural Orientation. I found one in particular very interesting. The report on "Assessments Portfolios" by Emily Gomez describes the complex situation of assessing students who are learning English as a second Language and the consequences it holds for the students.

Of all the respondents, Student G's is the most comprehensive in outlining the specific ways the MOOC enhanced the TEFLA course material.

The last two respondents did make use of the suggested MOOC and indicated that the MOOC as additional resource of learning was effective in enhancing the TEFLA course material. Both Students F and G indicated that they utilised the learning gleaned from the suggested MOOC into their teaching practice.

4.2.1.3. The co-ordinator's report: S2 of 2014

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the data from the co-ordinator's feedback report for Semester 2 of 2014 were analysed using the following questions as guidelines:

a. How did students use the suggested MOOC?
b. Did students experience the MOOC to be helpful as an additional
resource of teaching practice methodology?

Regarding the effectiveness of the MOOC as an additional resource in enhancing the TEFLA programme, the feedback report generated by the co-ordinator for TEFLA 2014 S2 (see appendix 5) reveals that:

"Most students found the MOOC very useful and instructive and of direct relevance to their course work and teaching practical sessions."

This comment reveals that, from interaction with the students, the co-ordinator regarded the MOOC to be effective in enhancing the TEFLA course content. Furthermore, the co-ordinator's conclusion regarding the use of the MOOC as an additional tool of learning was as follows:

"The MOOC was helpful as an additional resource for learning."

As a result, the co-ordinator thus recommended the following regarding the use of a MOOC as an additional teaching tool in the TEFLA programme:

"[It is therefore recommended that] The MOOC and OERs be retained in the course offering, and further incorporated via specific assessment questions in the assignments;"

These findings clearly indicate that the course co-ordinator regards the MOOC, as effective in enhancing the course content of the TEFLA SLP at UNISA. Due to the co-ordinator's direct involvement with the students, it may be deduced that these conclusions and recommendations are valid and accurate.

4.2.1.4. The co-ordinator's report: S2 of 2015

The data from the co-ordinator's feedback report for Semester 1 of 2015 were also analysed using same questions as in 4.2.1.3.

Regarding the effectiveness of the MOOC as an additional resource in enhancing the TEFLA programme, the feedback report generated by the co-ordinator for TEFLA 2015 S1 (see appendix 6) reveals that:
"Some students found the MOOC very useful and instructive and of direct relevance to their course work and teaching practical sessions. However, it seems that some of the other students, who did not perform all that well in their PoE's, did not take the MOOC."

These comments reveal that, from students' summative assessment results, the co-ordinator found a correlation between students' performance (grades achieved) and utilising the suggested MOOC. Thus, it may be deduced that students' performance in their grades can be directly linked to their participation in and utilisation of the MOOC as an additional resource. Therefore, the MOOC is effective in enhancing the TEFLA course for those students who make full use of it.

Furthermore, the co-ordinator's conclusions regarding the use of a MOOC as an additional tool of learning were as follows:

- "The MOOC was helpful as an additional resource for learning for those students who embraced it."
- "It may further be concluded that students do not always have free access to the internet, which could be a challenge in making this component of the course a requirement."

These conclusions by the course co-ordinator point out that there are issues of Internet access, as well as digital literacy in students, that affect their utilisation of a MOOC as an additional learning tool.

As a result of these findings and conclusions, the co-ordinator thus recommended the following regarding the use of a MOOC in the TEFLA programme:

- "Students' level of digital literacy should be carefully considered and a way found in which assistance can be offered to students who have difficulties in this regard;"
- "The MOOC and OERs be retained in the course offering, and further incorporated via continued specific assessment questions in the assignments;"
It is therefore evident that levels of digital literacy, as well as Internet access are challenges that need to be considered when assessing the effectiveness of a MOOC as an additional learning space for enhancing the TEFLA course. In addition, it may be deduced that students' participation and engagement in MOOCs can be directly related to their grade performance.

Therefore, the co-ordinator's report's findings and recommendations do indicate that the course co-ordinator regards the MOOC as effective in enhancing the course content of the TEFLA SLP at UNISA. Due to the co-ordinator's direct involvement with the students, it may be deduced that these conclusions and recommendations are valid and accurate.

4.2.1.5. Summary

From the students' responses to the PoE questions regarding the usefulness of the MOOC, it is evident that not all students made full use of this additional learning space. However, it seems that most students did make use of other additional online resources that they found on their own and, perhaps, as a result of the suggestion of the MOOC. Furthermore, most of the student responses indicate that engaging in online learning tools, which were not necessarily the suggested MOOC, helped them to develop their own English proficiency. Moreover, the students who did engage in the MOOC found it useful as a source of a deeper understanding of teaching in a global context, as well as a useful resource for classroom teaching materials. Furthermore, the students who did engage in the MOOC found the video-material useful as an instruction by showing how other teachers teach in global contexts. This encouraged the students to feel themselves as part of a global teaching community. In addition, some of the students also engaged in online discussion forums with other ESL teachers, thus becoming part of an online socio-cultural group and, in so doing, utilising the socio-cultural group for further development of their own teaching practice.

With this range and content of responses from students, it is not possible to attempt any quantifiable deductions. Nonetheless, one can conclude that
these students, even if they did not make use of the suggested MOOC directly, did make use of external digital sources of learning in order to enhance their own learning. This indicates a certain level of autonomy, encouraged by the distance-learning milieu of their studies and, more significantly, it confirms the connectivism and socio-cultural theories at work. In particular, some students revealed the use of online sources of knowledge in response to their learner's needs.

Lastly, the co-ordinator's reports reveal that digital literacy is a challenge for some students and may impede their ability to navigate the MOOC as digital learning space. Furthermore, some students do not have access to the Internet and this poses additional challenges when using a MOOC as an additional resource. The co-ordinator's report also indicates that there is a correlation between student's grade performance and their engagement in the MOOC. Consequently, the matter of the digital divide is raised here, as those students who do have the digital literacy skills and who do have Internet access, may ultimately perform better in an ODL context, than those students who do not have these facilities and skills. This issue might be a topic of further research.

4.2.2. The Webinar

As mentioned in Chapter 3, attendance and registration reports generated by the webinar hosting site were analysed to determine the usefulness of the webinar, paying particular attention to the students' comments and suggestions. The following questions were used as guidelines

a. Did the students actively engage in the webinar session and in what way?
b. What challenges did the students encounter in making use of the webinar?
c. Overall, how effective was the webinar in enhancing the TEFLA programme?
4.2.2.1. Students' participation: S2 of 2014

Table 1 (below) represents the webinar survey questions and responses. From the students' responses to the webinar survey, it is evident that all of the students who responded to the survey found the webinar useful as an additional learning resource. Furthermore, all of the respondents indicated that more webinars would facilitate a better understanding of the course work and would be helpful in clarifying their own understanding of the course material. Interestingly, only three of the respondents were emphatically positive in the helpfulness of seeing other students' questions and comments in the text box. One of the respondents did not find it useful to see other students' comments and questions in the text box at all and the other respondent was not sure whether this was useful or not. The questions and responses are tabled below (see appendix 3.3 for the report).

Table 1: TEFLA 2014 S2 Webinar Survey Questions and Responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1: Did you find this webinar useful? Give a brief explanation of your answer.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1: Yes - it allowed me to gather more information and understanding than what is written in the TUT letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2: Yes I did find it useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3: I did find it extremely helpful. I can now submit a meaning portfolio having been briefed on how to put the document together, what information is required on the document and I feel more connected with the other trainees and you, Rona.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4: Wonderful it was the first time of moving from the cold printed ink to hearing your (sic.) voice. There were also a lot of additional information, clarification, explanation, examples, samples etc., that are totally unavailable in our course books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUGGESTIONS:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. We could engage in Pre presentation chats to set up and wait for others to be ready. (Pre presentation and post presentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Questions could be delayed a little until you pause for questions occasionally. This will let the presentation flow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5: Yes I did. I thought the information and instructions in the tutorial letter was simple enough but the webinar provided me with useful information and guidance that will allow me to improve my portfolio.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2: Did you find the technical set-up of this webinar easy to follow? Rate from 1 for very difficult to 5 for very easy.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4: 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 5: 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question 3: Do you think it would be useful to have more webinars for the TEFLA course and, if so, on what aspects of the content for this course? If no, please explain your answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1: Definitely. The written word often leaves too much room for interpretation which could result in learner error. The webinar provides the opportunity to clarify one's understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 2: Yes Please</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 3: Absolutely. I would have been far better prepared for my two previous teaching practice sessions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondent 4: Yes. Wish it's incorporated to the whole course where there would be scheduled Webinar for content and others. Human interaction is always better than e-mail and WhatsApp. Though those media are still helpful when communicating with you.

Respondent 5: It would be very beneficial to have more webinar sessions.

Question 4: To what extent has this webinar helped you to understand how to compile your PoE? Rate from 1 for not helpful at all to 5 for extremely helpful.

| Respondent 1:    | no response |
| Respondent 2:    | 5           |
| Respondent 3:    | no response |
| Respondent 4:    | 5           |
| Respondent 5:    | 4           |

Question 5: Did you find it helpful to see the other students' questions and comments in the text box?

| Respondent 1:    | No          |
| Respondent 2:    | Yes         |
| Respondent 3:    | Yes         |
| Respondent 4:    | Maybe       |
| Respondent 5:    | Yes         |

Question 6: What device did you use to access the webinar?

| Respondent 1:    | Laptop / PC |
| Respondent 2:    | Laptop / PC |
| Respondent 3:    | Laptop / PC |
| Respondent 4:    | Laptop / PC |
| Respondent 5:    | Laptop / PC |

One of the respondents went so far as to suggest ways to improve the facilitation of the webinar, particularly in allowing for "Pre presentation chats to set up and wait for others to be ready. (Pre presentation and post presentation)" and also that "Questions could be delayed a little until you pause for questions occasionally. This will let the presentation flow." Therefore, this student indicates an active engagement in suggestions for better technical functionality, as well as a more cohesive facilitation. In this manner, the student displays active participation in the socio-cultural construct of meaning in this particular socio-cultural group, that is, the participants in the webinar, as well as the TEFLA student body as a whole.

Lastly, the respondents did not indicate technical difficulties and they experienced the technical set-up of the webinar as easy to use. This finding is surprising, considering the fact that some students experienced technical difficulties during the webinar.

However, it should be noted that all of the survey respondents utilised laptops / PC’s to access the webinar and, one may argue that this could be the reason for their ease of access. One may further deduce that students who accessed the webinar via other mobile devices, such as tablets and
mobile phones, experienced more technical difficulties and that is perhaps why they did not participate in the webinar survey at all.

Thus, from the data analysed above, it is evident that students found the webinar a useful tool in enhancing their learning on the TEFLA SLP offered in a distance-learning context. Hence, the response from students was very positive and the respondents in the survey indicated that more webinars should be hosted as part of the TEFLA offering.

The discussion will now analyse the findings obtained from data collected during Semester 1 of 2015.

4.2.2.2. Students' participation: S1 of 2015

The attendee report (please see appendix 3.5.) contains questions, answers and comments made by participants. This report clearly illustrates that some participants had difficulties in hearing the co-ordinator's voice at times and there were also technical difficulties experienced by some of the participants. One of the participants struggled to get an Internet connection to the webinar and therefore 'arrived' about halfway through the webinar. These are technical difficulties that need to be addressed. However, due to the webinar being again hosted by an outsourced tool, the co-ordinator did not have any control over these technical challenges. Furthermore, Internet connections tend to be a challenge in South Africa at times and this is not something that is easily resolved. Moreover, it is not clear whether the technical difficulties experienced were due to bad Internet connections, or due to the student's inability to navigate the digital device and the technological set-up of the webinar and the Internet connection.

The webinar survey questions and responses are depicted in Table 2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1: Did you find this webinar useful? Give a brief explanation of your answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1</strong>: Yes, it is an opportunity to have listening contact with Ms R. Marx and we are listening to instructions and questions can be posed. Beginner teachers also need listening skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2: Did you find the technical set-up of this webinar easy to follow? Rate from 1 for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2</strong>: Yes. I now understand what is expected of me regarding the Teaching Portfolios.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3: Do you think it would be useful to have more webinars for the TEFLA course and, if so, on what aspects of the content for this course? If no, please explain your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> Yes it is useful, I think if we can do a grammar question discussion to help re-educate us on what we should focus on and understand in grammar teaching. I am 55 years old and to be a student after so many years I do need help if I want to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> No. A webinar at the start of the course would be sufficient.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 4: To what extent has this webinar helped you to understand how to compile your PoE? Rate from 1 for not helpful at all to 5 for extremely helpful.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 5: Did you find it helpful to see the other students' questions and comments in the text box?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> Yes, it was very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> Unsure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 6: What device did you use to access the webinar?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> My Laptop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> I-Pad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 7: Did you find that the presenter gave you useful advice and guidance during the webinar? Please indicate your answer on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 8: Please rate the quality of the visual presentation used by the presenter on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest score.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 9: Do you think webinars like this should allow for more interaction from the participants? Please explain your answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> I think it depends on the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 2:</strong> Yes, you will &quot;meet&quot; fellow students and will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss different topics related to the course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 10: Do you think a webinar like this should be conducted at the start of the semester as an induction for students? Please explain your answer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent 1:</strong> Yes, it would be great help as many students are busy and can overlook new announcements and can misunderstand what is required. The students also have a opportunity to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus the survey report reveals that both respondents found the webinar useful, with specific mention of the value of the webinar as a synchronous learning activity. Furthermore, respondents indicated that the technical set-up of the webinar was relatively easy to navigate. However, one of the respondents did point out technical difficulties, but it is not clear whether these issues were encountered due to software-, hardware- or digital literacy challenges. Interestingly, this survey revealed that the respondent who attended the webinar via a laptop had technical difficulties, while the respondent who participated in the webinar by means of an iPad did not experience the same technical difficulties.

One of the respondents found it useful to see the other participants' questions and comments in the text box during the webinar, but the other respondent was not sure about whether it was helpful or not. However, the respondent who was unsure about this did indicate elsewhere on the survey that webinars like this should allow for more interaction between participants.

Both respondents found value in the facilitator's instruction, in that it offered them clarity on how to compile their PoE's. One of the respondents specifically states that "I now understand what is expected of me regarding the Teaching Portfolios."
Furthermore, both respondents indicated that a webinar should be hosted at the start of the semester in order to assist the students with navigating their way to all the sources of information and course content included in the programme.

Thus, it may be deduced from the survey report that the respondents found the webinar an effective additional tool in enhancing their learning in the TEFLA programme.

Due to students' disappointment at not being able to access a recording of the S2 2014 webinar after the event (please refer to 4.2.3) a recording was made available after the webinar hosted during Semester 1 of 2015 (please refer to appendix 3.7. for the Webinar Recording Registrants Report). Although the identities of the participants may not be revealed here in order to comply with ethical policies of UNISA, it should be noted that 3 students viewed the recording of the webinar. The participants viewed the recording more than once. Two of the students who viewed the recording also participated in the webinar and one of the students did not participate in the scheduled webinar due to an inability to access the Internet at the time of the webinar. S/he was in Angola at the time, in an area with limited Internet access.

The student who could not attend the scheduled webinar, but watched the recording afterwards, posted the following on the myUnisa TEFL01-6 site on 1 May 2015 at 09:33:54:

```
Good morning Ms Marx.
I found the recording of the webinar very useful. The information you gave was clear and easy to understand.
Hope you have a lovely weekend.
Kind regards.
```

Therefore, although the student did not personally attend the webinar, the information presented during the webinar was still useful to the student when viewed on the recording.

Thus, from the data analysed above, it is evident that most students found the webinar a useful tool in enhancing their learning on the TEFLA SLP
offered in a distance-learning context. These findings echo the findings revealed after the webinar hosted during Semester 2 of 2014. It should be noted that there are still technical issues that need to be taken into consideration when utilising this digital tool of learning, specifically Internet access, as well as students' levels of digital literacy. However, the general response from students was very positive and the respondents in the survey indicated that more webinars should be hosted as part of the TEFLA offering.

4.2.2.3. The co-ordinator's reports: S2 of 2014

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the co-ordinator's feedback report for Semester 2 of 2014 (see appendix 5) was analysed by addressing the following questions:

a. Did the students actively engage in the webinar session and in what way?
b. What challenges did the students encounter in making use of the webinar?
c. Overall, how effective was the webinar in enhancing the TEFLA programme?

The co-ordinator's report indicates that some students encountered technical difficulties with access and interaction during the webinar.

"The webinar was very well received and most of the students registered and participated. There were a few technical difficulties, but these were soon resolved. Unfortunately, the recording of the webinar could not be sent to students, nor posted on myUnisa, due to its large file size (58MB). The students were very disappointed about this. However, the PowerPoint presentation was e-mailed to all participants after the webinar."

Furthermore, in the conclusions section of the report, the co-ordinator surmises that "The webinar was a success and some students requested more webinars on various topics relevant to the course material." Following on from this conclusion, the co-ordinator recommends that
"More webinars be conducted regularly in order to improve synchronous learning opportunities. Furthermore, it is recommended that The Povey Centre investigate a method or vehicle for making the webinar recordings available to students, taking into consideration the large file size of such recordings."

4.2.2.4. The co-ordinator's report: S1 of 2015

The co-ordinator's feedback report for Semester 1 of 2015 (see appendix 6) was also analysed by addressing the questions mentioned in 4.2.2.3.

The co-ordinator's report does indicate that some students encountered technical difficulties with registering for and interacting during the webinar. The co-ordinator's report further reveals that students' levels of digital literacy were not as competent as expected.

As for the effectiveness of the webinar in enhancing the TEFLA programme, the feedback report generated by the co-ordinator for TEFLA 2015 S1 (see appendix 6) reveals that:

- "The students who posted enquiries regarding the PoE; who attended the webinar and/or watched the recording of the webinar (details of which were posted on the myUnisa sites); who reviewed the slides posted on the myUnisa sites, performed very well in their PoE's. On the other hand, the students who did not take these steps did not perform well in their PoE's."

- "The webinar was not very well received and only a few of the students registered and participated. There were a few technical difficulties, and this was due to students not understanding the requirements of attending the webinar. This difficulty could also be due to the fact that an outsourced webinar provider had to be used, as the myUnisa portlet does not currently offer this facility."

These comments reveal that, from students' summative assessment results, the co-ordinator found a correlation between students' performance (grades achieved) and participation in the webinar. Those students who attended the webinar and/or viewed the recording achieved better results in their final
PoE's. Thus, it may be deduced that students' performance in their grades can be directly linked to their participation in the webinar. Therefore, the webinar as an additional digital tool of learning is effective in enhancing the TEFLA course, for those students who participate in it.

Furthermore, the co-ordinator's conclusions regarding the use of a webinar as an additional tool of learning were as follows:

"The webinar was not a great success, due to students' challenges with negotiating their way around the digital learning spaces. However, those students who did attend or watch the recording of it requested more webinars on various topics relevant to the course material."

These conclusions by the course co-ordinator point out that there are issues of Internet access, as well as digital literacy in students, that affect their utilisation of a webinar as an additional learning tool. As a result of these findings and conclusions, the co-ordinator thus recommended the following regarding the use of a webinar as an additional teaching tool in the TEFLA programme:

✓ "Students' level of digital literacy should be carefully considered and a way found in which assistance can be offered to students who have difficulties in this regard;"

✓ "A webinar or podcast be recorded and made available to all students on the myUnisa sites in order to guide them in the navigation of the digital learning spaces, as well as the use of myUnisa;"

✓ "More webinars be conducted regularly in order to improve synchronous learning opportunities, help with negotiation of digital learning spaces; as well as assistance with assignment questions. Furthermore, it is recommended that The Povey Centre investigate a method or vehicle for making the webinar recordings available to students, taking into consideration the large file size of such recordings;"

Therefore, the co-ordinator's report's findings and recommendations do indicate that the course co-ordinator regards the webinar as effective in
enhancing the course content of the TEFLA SLP at UNISA. Due to the co-ordinator's direct involvement with the students, it may be deduced that these conclusions and recommendations are valid and accurate.

4.2.2.5. Summary

The students who did participate in the webinars found them a useful synchronous learning space. Students indicated that they would appreciate more webinars on relevant topics to be offered earlier on in the semester. Therefore, students who participated in the webinars and who viewed the recording of the second webinar, found that their engagement in this learning space as useful and an enhancement to the TEFLA course.

However, it is also evident that levels of digital literacy, as well as Internet access are challenges that need to be considered when assessing the effectiveness of a webinar as an additional learning space in enhancing the TEFLA course. As with the MOOCs, there might be a digital divide between those students who have acceptable digital literacy skills, as well as Internet access, and those students who do not have these facilities and skills.

Lastly, it may be deduced that students' participation and engagement webinars as additional digital tools of learning can be directly related to their grade performance.

4.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has perused and analysed the findings in this study. The effectiveness of MOOCs was analysed first, by considering students' reflections in their final assessments, as well as the co-ordinator's reports for the two semesters under review. Subsequently, the effectiveness of the webinars was also analysed according to the same structure. The overall effectiveness of the MOOCs and webinars were ascertained in summaries in their respective sections. In the summaries it was concluded that, notwithstanding technical difficulties, as well as a lack of digital literacy among some students, the MOOC and the webinar were both
effective in enhancing the TEFLA SLP offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA.

In the next and final chapter, a synthesis and implications of the findings will be discussed. In addition, guidelines for the effective use of MOOCs and webinars in ODL will be suggested. Finally, recommendations and for further studies will be made.
Chapter 5 – Synthesis: Deductions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The concluding chapter of this study provides a synthesis and outlines the implications of the findings. The benefits and weaknesses of MOOCs and webinars are discussed after which guidelines and recommendations are postulated.

The research questions, also formulated in Chapter 1, were as follows:

Taking the TEFLA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults) programme, offered at UNISA, an ODL (Open Distance Learning) university, as a case study, this study sought to investigate the following research questions:

1. How effective are MOOCs, as online additional resources for enhancing EFL teaching and learning?
2. How effective are webinars, as online tools for enhancing EFL teacher-training?
3. What guidelines can inform the effective use of online tools to enhance EFL teacher-training in an Open Distance Learning context?

5.2. The Effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional resources to enhance a TEFLA course in an ODL environment.

5.2.1. MOOCs

*How effective are MOOCs, as online additional resources for enhancing EFL teaching and learning?*
5.2.1.1. Benefits of MOOCs

From the analysis in Chapter 4, some of the main benefits of utilising a MOOC as an additional resource have emerged.

Students were able to utilise the suggestion of engaging in the MOOC to navigate their own way to additional online resources, whether these be MOOCs or other Open Education Resources (OERs). Therefore, by making use of the suggested subject-specific MOOC, students also formed connections to other online sources of knowledge that proved helpful in their studies. This behaviour substantiates the theory of connectivism (as discussed in Chapter 2) insofar as students used their own initiative to form connections to sources of knowledge that were relevant and useful to their own learning. More specifically, this behaviour confirms Siemens' explanation of how learning takes place in the contemporary educational environment that has been shaped and affected by the emergence of technological advances (Siemens, 2005: 3-10).

Furthermore, the analysis in Chapter 4 has revealed that, by engaging in and making use of online resources, students felt themselves part of a global community of EFL teachers. Therefore, students felt less isolated as learner-teachers because they could identify with other teachers and student-teachers in the discipline of EFL. Being part of a global community of EFL teachers links to the socio-cultural theory (as discussed in Chapter 2), specifically relating to Swan's (in Cleveland-Innes and Garrison, 2010:108-129) proposal that online learning provides new opportunities for learner-centred pedagogies that offer spaces for socio-cultural interaction through collaborative learning that promotes enquiry, interaction and critical thinking in a higher education context. Swan goes on to say that emerging technologies have the particular function of facilitating new kinds of learning experiences for students in a distance education environment. Her proposition is substantiated by the findings that emerged from this study, because students indicated that they could utilise information regarding ideas for lesson plans, class activities and learning material in the suggested MOOC. Furthermore, students indicated that the MOOC offered
value in the form of video tutorials that brought the EFLT theories and teaching methodologies to life that can be incorporated into students' own teaching practice. Moreover, the findings reveal that the suggested MOOC contextualised the discipline of EFL learning as a global practice taking place in varied situations around the world, for the learner-teachers registered for the TEFLA course. In addition, students indicated that the video tutorials and examples of teaching around the world in the suggested MOOC made students feel more confident in their own teaching practice, as they realised that many teachers of EFL are not native speakers of English themselves.

The incorporation of what they have viewed in the video tutorials into their own teaching practice, ties in with experiential knowledge, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. Wallace (1991: 15) refers to experiential knowledge as the development of schemata by the trainees related to the "knowledge-in-action by practice of the profession". This experiential knowledge encompasses all of the interactions, as well as the social constructs involved in the learning of a foreign language and also offers the opportunity for reflection on practice. One may further link this concept of experiential knowledge to the Connectivism and Socio-cultural Theories, as discussed in the Theoretical Framework in Chapter 2.

Moreover, it has emerged from this study that the suggested MOOC was useful to the students insofar as the videos also illustrated the teaching of certain topics in real-life contexts – an opportunity that was not available in the online course structure of the TEFLA programme. Students also indicated that the suggested MOOC enhanced their understanding and application of teaching methodology in the TEFL classroom, thus turning received knowledge into experiential knowledge. The suggested MOOC also provided insight on the wider scope of teaching methodologies available to the EFL teacher. These aspects of the MOOC were clearly regarded as beneficial by the students and, furthermore, they tie in with McGrath's Model \((\text{Figure 2})\) representing the relationship between knowledge and skill in the development of teaching skills (McGrath, 1993: 71). McGrath (in Howard and McGrath, 1993:72) explains that
"Knowledge, according to this model, can only become skills through suitable experience; and experience distilled through personal reflection serves to refine and extend the knowledge-base". As was discussed in Chapter 2, McGrath further posits that certain knowledge is acquired through classroom experiences, but that there is a certain body or collection of "descriptive knowledge" (ibid.) that is more appropriately learned from sources outside of the classroom. He specifically mentions "analytical knowledge about the target language...principles on which teaching can be planned and conducted... awareness-raising in relation to cultural differences, individual learner differences, and teaching aids and resources." (ibid.). He goes on to advocate "sustained and systematic study" as the preferred method for acquiring the knowledge that is essential to learning to be an effective teacher. One may therefore deduce that the suggested MOOC was effective in this regard, as the students could assimilate and develop their awareness of different teaching methodologies in varied contexts around the world, through watching and reflecting upon the video tutorials in the suggested MOOC. One may deduce that the reason why students who engaged in the MOOC performed better in the final summative assessment in the shape of a PoE, was exactly because they were able to apply the knowledge gained from participation in the MOOC, to their teaching practice.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory (Britton, 1994: 261) is most relevant in this particular context, as it contends that language acquisition, as well as teaching, is achieved through the shaping of human consciousness, achieved by the internalisation of shared social behaviour. This shared social behaviour links with the socio-cultural theory of language teaching and learning as described in the Theoretical Framework of this study. Informed by the framework of this theory, one may surmise that a subject-specific MOOC serves as an aid to negotiating the digital landscape that is shaping the current ESL and TEFLA socio-cultural environment.

As far as this digital landscape is concerned, incorporating a subject-specific MOOC into the TEFLA programme at Unisa can be considered as
programme delivery that operates in the 4th generation of delivery in distance education (White, 2013 and Rumble, 2011). Furthermore, the non-time specific MOOC can be regarded as an asynchronous learning activity (White, 2003: 9) that is convenient for students, as they can access it at any time. Therefore, the findings of this case study reinforces the findings in Motteram's study on distance education for language teachers using educational technology (1993: 95) that revealed that the use of online learning is increasingly becoming a necessary part of ELT in general and that distance-learning materials are more flexible in their availability due to technology.

The findings of this case did reveal certain challenges, however, and these will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.1.2. Weaknesses of MOOCs

The main challenges posed by MOOCs as additional resources for learning is that it requires access to the Internet, as well as digital literacy skills. It merged from the analysis in Chapter 4 that some students do not have ready access to the Internet, nor do they possess the necessary digital literacy skills for engaging in the suggested MOOC. As pointed out by Anderson and Dron (2012), technology and pedagogy should complement each other in the learning experience in order for the learning experience to be of value. They remind us that "Together, technology and pedagogy reveal and develop our human creativity and responsiveness and allow us to learn effectively and enjoyably." As mentioned in Chapter 2, in order for this cohesion to take place at all and in order for learners to access the pedagogy offered by technology, certain skills are essential; skills that may be termed as digital literacy. White (2003:29) reminds us that students, who are expected to form connections in a digital environment, should possess a certain level of computer literacy. One should remain cognisant, therefore, of the skills required in navigating knowledge offered by the MOOC.

Furthermore, the use of the MOOC also highlights the importance of autonomy in the distance-learning language learner-teacher (Broady,
1993:49-62 and Haworth and Parker, 1993:78-94). The findings of this study (as discussed in Chapter 4) reveal that some students did not engage in the suggested MOOC and, although the reasons for this inactivity are not definite, one may surmise that, ultimately, the learner-teacher in a distance-learning landscape needs to take responsibility for their own constructs of knowledge and experience, by making full use of the different sources of knowledge available to them. It is only through autonomous learning by making full use of the resources made available to students that the full effectiveness of the MOOC as an enhancement to the existing course material, can be capitalised on.

Thus, the challenge for learners in the online learning distance education environment includes digital literacy skills, meaningful interaction skills, as well as the ability to actively participate in socio-cultural constructs inherent in the digital learning environment. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Rodríguez Illera (in Brown and Davis (eds.), 2004:55) offers an interesting perspective on digital literacy as an essential aspect imbedded in the 'culture' of multimedia learning in the digital world. He questions whether multimedia is necessarily conducive to learning and whether the overuse of multimedia in learning can lead to 'cognitive dispersion' due to information overload. In this context, cognitive dispersion could also refer to the level of a learner's digital literacy and the extent to which learners can process information offered through the use of multimedia.

One should remain au courant, therefore, that the use of digital tools in the learning space may be more challenging for some students than for others. But then, these challenges in engaging with the suggested MOOC are not unique to this particular digital sphere of learning and it can be regarded as true for all types of learning, as learning skills and aptitudes for learning differ from one student to the next. That is, some students are more adapt at negotiating any learning space, digital or otherwise, than other students. Bonk and Cunningham (in Bonk and King (eds.), 1998:25-50) substantiate this claim by surmising that "Views on questions such as the nature of the mind are developed by considering not only philosophical questions like the
form of underlying mental representation, but also the world within which learners function... a primary tenet of Vygotskian psychology is that individual mental functioning is inherently situated in social interactional, cultural, institutional, and historic contexts”. Furthermore, Starkey (2012:46) affirms that "It is the ability to have the knowledge to be able to apply concepts to the world in which they [students] live that prepares them to actively participate in the society in which they live." Ergo, learning depends on any individual learner's capacity to negotiate meaning within any social learning environment.

With these deductions in mind, one may postulate that that answer to the research question stated above is that MOOCs, as online additional resources for enhancing EFL teaching and learning in a distance education context, are effective for some students. Thus, the suggested MOOC had much to offer as an enhancement to the existing pedagogical framework of the TEFLA programme offered as a SLP at UNISA. Furthermore, students who engaged in the suggested MOOC achieved better results in their summative assessments. However, student autonomy and appropriate digital literacy skills are key to the MOOC's successful application to teaching practice for individual students. In other words, the MOOC has the potential to enhance the learning for those students who make full use of it.

5.2.2. Webinars

*How effective are webinars, as online tools for enhancing EFL teacher-training?*

5.2.2.1. Benefits of Webinars

From the analysis in Chapter 4, some of the main benefits of utilising a webinar as an additional tool of learning have emerged.

The main benefit of utilising a webinar as an additional source of learning, is the fact that it is a synchronous learning experience. It is the use of a digital tool for communication in "real time" (White, 2003:10). The
webinars offer distance learners in the language-teaching environment with an environment where human interaction can take place (Jennings, 1993: 105). From the findings in Chapter 4, it may be deduced that students found the webinars useful in that it provided a synchronous learning sphere where students could have their questions addressed. Furthermore, it provided them with detailed knowledge that was directly relevant to the compiling of their PoE's as final summative assessments at the end of the TEFLA course.

Engaging in the webinars confirm the aspects of learning propounded by the socio-cultural theory discussed in Chapter 2. According to Vygotsky and his colleagues, metacognitive functioning involved in learning is a "mediated process" that involves the organisation of cultural artefacts, activities and concepts (Ratner (2002) in Lantolf and Thorne, 2007:197). Lantolf and Thorne (2007: 197-198) further postulate that this theory proposes that, "while human neurobiology is a necessary condition for higher order thinking, the most important forms of human cognitive activity develop through interaction within these social and material environments."

In other words, one may surmise that teacher-learners in this study utilised the webinars as social constructs that act as cultural artefacts for social interaction that led to the cognitive acquisition of knowledge.

It may be further deduced from the findings in Chapter 2 that the webinars offer opportunities for interactivity that are often lacking in the distance-learning environment due to limitations of time and space (Jennings, 1993: 105). Thus, the use of webinars as additional tools of learning support Vygotsky's claims in his socio-cultural theory that learning takes place through interactivity (Britton, 1994: 261).

Furthermore, it may be deduced that webinars improved the participating students' general education, as well as their subject knowledge (Perraton in Howard and McGrath, 1993:23). Understanding the value and aims of compiling PoE's can be very superficial for learner-teachers and the use of the webinars provided clarity on its use and requirements. As the PoE's also link directly to their teaching practical requirements, the webinars offered
valuable insights to the students in a synchronous learning sphere. Thus, the webinars acted as complementary learning spaces for students, in addition to the resources available as part of the TEFLA course.

As with the MOOC, the findings on the usefulness of webinars did reveal certain challenges. These will be highlighted in the next section.

5.2.2.2. Weaknesses of Webinars

When utilising technology of any description, there is always the possibility of experiencing technological glitches and thus it was with the webinars that were hosted for the students on the TEFLA programme as a part of this study. As mentioned elsewhere, Internet connections in South Africa tend to be sporadic and problematic and the findings revealed that Internet connectivity was a challenge during the webinar sessions. Furthermore, an outsourced webinar hosting site had to be used, due to the fact that Unisa did not, at that stage, have this facility on its digital learning tool (myUnisa).

Furthermore, as with the MOOC, digital literacy skills in students also emerged as a challenge when utilising webinars as tools of learning. In addition, not all of the registered students participated in the webinars offered during their semester. While there is no clear reason for this failure to participate in the webinars, one may surmise that it could be due to students' inability to access the Internet (for various reasons), as well as a lack in digital literacy skills. As was demonstrated earlier in this chapter, one needs to remain aware of the different skills-levels and digital literacy of individual students. Conrad and Donaldson (2011:7-8) suggest that students' abilities to be engaged learners progress with usage and that engaging interactively and collaboratively is not inherent in adult learners who have received previous instruction in a mainly lecture-based context.

Thus, webinars as digital tools of learning pose challenges for some students who need to make use of cultural artefacts (in this case, the online digital learning sphere) in order to navigate their way around the socio-cultural group (the group of students) in order to engage in the learning
activity. Furthermore, the ability to access the information on any digital tool of education requires digital literacy skills that vary from one student to the next, depending on their own experience of using technology as a socio-cultural artefact.

With these deductions in mind, one may postulate that that answer to the research question stated above is that webinars, as an additional resource and as a synchronous learning tool, does enhance the course offering of the TEFLA course in a distance-learning environment. As with the suggested MOOC, however, required digital literacy skills are key to the successful utilisation of webinars as an enhancement to the pedagogical framework of the TEFLA SLP. Thus, just like engagement in the MOOC, participation in the webinar also has the potential to enhance the learning for those students who make full use of it.

5.3. Guidelines and Recommendations

What guidelines can inform the effective use of online tools to enhance EFL teacher-training in an Open Distance Learning context?

As a result of the deductions postulated in this chapter, while also bearing in mind the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 2 of this study, one may construct the following guidelines to inform the effective use of online tools, specifically MOOCs and webinars, to enhance EFL teacher-training in an Open Distance Learning Context:

1. The use of MOOCs in EFL teacher-training is effective in their demonstration of the theory of connectivism in that students' cognitive development can be enhanced by their ability to form connections to sources of knowledge that will enhance their learning experience. However, any MOOCs introduced as an addition to any pedagogical framework should be subject related and should be directly relevant to the discipline of EFL teaching. It should be regarded as asynchronous learning, in which student autonomy should be encouraged.
2. The use of webinars in EFL teacher-training offers students the socio-cultural aspects of education that are often lacking in the distance-learning environment. It can be successfully utilised as synchronous learning activities and tools of instruction, provided that students can be encouraged to make use of this tool.

3. The instruction provided in webinars can be orientational, in terms of helping students to navigate their way around the course work and additional resources. In addition, webinars can be useful in the instruction of course content and assessments criteria required by the formative and summative assessments.

4. Webinars can also be useful in guiding students away from plagiarism and instructing them on correct referencing techniques.

5. MOOCs and webinars utilised as digital tools of learning should be informed by convenience, as well as ease of access and use.

6. Both the use of MOOCs, as well as webinars, should strive to encourage students to turn received knowledge into experiential knowledge. This can be done by including specific questions regarding their utilisation of these digital tools into the formative and summative assessments required by the course.

7. Students' levels of digital literacy should be taken into consideration when utilising MOOCs and webinars as an enhancement to any EFL teacher-training course.

8. Conversely, by introducing these digital tools, students' digital literacy can be developed by requiring them to engage in these additional tools of learning.

5.4. Significance of this study in distance-learning language teacher-training SLP's

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the findings of this case study cannot be quantified, due to the limited data available for analysis. However, the significance of this study for the remodelling of language teacher-training SLP’s in a distance-learning environment, by incorporating digital tools into the pedagogical framework, may be useful as a basis for further research.
Furthermore, it may be deduced that the use of these digital tools can enhance students' learning experience synchronously, as well as asynchronously, as they offer alternative tools of learning for students, in addition to the existing course work. In addition, these digital tools can open up the field of language teaching for learners, and make them aware of the teaching theories and methodologies and how these are applied in global classroom contexts. Engaging in subject-related MOOCs can also make students feel part of the global language teaching community and it can encourage them to form constructs of knowledge by navigating their way around pathways of learning that are available on the Internet. Furthermore, webinars are useful tools of synchronous learning activities and can address the socio-cultural aspects that are typically lacking in distance-learning landscapes. Moreover, the use of MOOCs and webinars in a language teacher-training SLP in a distance-learning environment can encourage autonomy in students. These digital tools can also serve to bring students up to speed in the development of their literacy skills.

It is essential, however, that any MOOCs incorporated into the pedagogical framework of language teacher-training should be subject-specific and should offer opportunities for students to assimilate theoretical knowledge, reflect on and develop their own learning and teaching practice. Finally, the use of webinars should be regarded as synchronous learning opportunities that are learner-centered and that offer relevant instruction on course work directly related to the learner-teacher programme.

5.5. Conclusion

This study aimed to explore how emerging technologies, specifically MOOCs and webinars, may be utilised as digital resources and tools in the pedagogical methodology of English Foreign Language teacher-training in a distance education environment.

Thus Chapter 1 has provided an introduction, as well as an overview of the study, by briefly considering the current landscape of distance learning, as well as the pedagogical potentialities offered by digital web-based tools
towards enhancing the learning experience for students enrolled in an EFL teacher-training programme. Withal, this Chapter has outlined the research problem, research aims, as well as the research questions to be addressed in this study.

Chapter 2 has provided the theoretical framework of the study by considering the *socio-cultural* and *connectivist* theories of learning in an educational environment which is increasingly embracing digital tools of course delivery and learning spaces. Furthermore, the relevant literature on English foreign-language learning and teaching was reviewed, with a look at some of the main theories that have shaped this discipline. Moreover, this chapter explored some of the models related to the training of foreign language teachers in a distance-learning context, as well as models relevant to the acquisition of teaching knowledge and skills. Chapter 2 also perused the relevant models of delivery of language teacher-training programmes in a distance education environment and offered definitions of the concepts of synchronous and asynchronous- teaching. The use of CMC, particularly in the context of English foreign-language learning and teacher-training in an open distance learning context, was explored, including the definitions of, as well as the research on the usefulness of, MOOCs and webinars as computer mediated communication tools. This Chapter then concluded with an outline of the SLPs offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA, in particular the TEFLA programme. A closer look was taken at the content and delivery of the TEFLA programme, including an outline of the relevant study guides.

Chapter 3 yielded details of the research design and methodology employed in this, a case study, with particular attention to the proposed remodelling of English Foreign Language teacher-training tools of pedagogical methodology through the use of digital technologies in Open Distance Learning contexts. In addition, chapter 3 outlined the methodology employed in data collection, sampling and analysis of data, specifically the data analyses utilised in assessing the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional learning resources in the TEFLA Short Learning
Programme offered by The Povey Centre at UNISA. Furthermore, data analysis strategies were considered in terms of utilising the co-ordinator's reports for Semester 2 of 2014 and Semester 1 of 2015. This chapter also outlined the ethical clearance obtained for this research, and it explained the significance, as well as the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 described, perused and analysed the findings obtained during the case study. The analysis was informed by and structured according to the research questions, commencing with data obtained from the TEFLA programme offered during Semester 2 of 2014, followed by a discussion of the data collected from the TEFLA programme during Semester 1 of 2015.

As the concluding chapter of this study, Chapter 5 has amalgamated the final deductions and consequent recommendations based on the research aims of this case study. These aims, as well as the research questions, were briefly revisited in order to inform the deductions and recommendations. Deductions were made regarding the effectiveness of MOOCs and webinars as additional resources for the TEFLA course at Unisa, by considering each of the resources separately. The benefits and weaknesses were discussed under each resource, whereupon guidelines and recommendations were postulated. The recommendations included guidelines to inform the pedagogical framework of an online language teacher-training Short Learning Programme.

It is the researcher's hope that this case study succeeds in offering an interesting insight into this topic and that it may enhance the research in this field of study. May it prove to be useful in the application of its findings in the remodelling of language teacher-training programmes in a distance-learning environment, by incorporating digital tools into the pedagogical framework.
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Appendix 1 – University of Oregon *Shaping the Way We Teach* MOOC course outline
Appendix 3 – University of Oregon Shaping the Way we Teach MOOC course outline.

"Shaping the Way We Teach English" is made up of the following modules and topics. The Manual is available for download as a PDF file.

Videos are also now available through YouTube-UO (use the word "Shaping" to search for them all at once). You can also click on the links below to access them individually. Turn on closed caption if you would like to see what people in the video are saying. See technical support for online viewing guidelines. If the videos play too slowly online, you can download them by pasting the links in the KeepVid website and then saving them to your computer for offline viewing.

- Watch the Video: Introduction.
- Watch the Video: Module 01, Contextualizing Language.
- Watch the Video: Module 02, Building Language Awareness.
- Watch the Video: Module 03, Integrating Skills.
- Watch the Video: Module 04, Pair and Group Work.
- Watch the Video: Module 05, Learner Feedback.
- Watch the Video: Module 06, Managing Large Classes.
- Watch the Video: Module 07, Learning Strategies.
- Watch the Video: Module 08, Authentic Materials.
- Watch the Video: Module 09, Critical & Creative Thinking Skills.
- Watch the Video: Module 10, Alternative Assessment.
- Watch the Video: Module 11, Individual Learner Differences.
- Watch the Video: Module 12, Younger Learners.
- Watch the Video: Module 13, Teacher Development: Peer Observation.
- Watch the Video: Module 14, Teacher Development: Reflective Teaching.

Video Transcripts

Available for modules: Intro * 01 * 02 * 03 * 04 * 05 * 06 * 07 * 08 * 09 * 10 * 11 * 12 * 13 * 14.

Video "See/Don't See" Viewing Guides

To help identify main ideas for: Intro * 01 * 03 * 04 * 05 * 06 * 07 * 08 * 09 * 10 * 11 * 12 [PDFs].

Supplementary International Video Library Collection

New! Teachers have begun developing locally relevant and specialized training materials around the world. Some examples of this, in alphabetical order by country, include:

- Russia: Website developed by David Fay, Elena Solovova, Elena Markova through the English Language Office of the U.S. Embassy Moscow (additional videos available in DVD format in Russia).
- Saudi Arabia: Arabic subtitles added to the original videos, developed by Iqbal Al-Shuhail as part of the T2Reach Channel project (this is a YouTube playlist).

New! In training around the world, teachers have often asked if it would be possible to see full-length versions of some of the classes. Below are videos University of Oregon, American English Institute created in response to this.

- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a university-level EFL course, Part 1 [Egypt].
- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a university-level EFL course, Part 2 [Egypt].
- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a secondary-level EFL course, Part 1 [Costa Rica].
- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a secondary-level EFL course, Part 2 [Costa Rica].
- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a secondary-level ESL course, Part 1 [African, in the DC area].
- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a secondary-level ESL course, Part 2 [African, in the DC area].
- Watch the Video: Full-length class of a primary-level bilingual course.
New! Teachers and teacher-trainers have also asked to see an example of a trainer using the "Shaping" materials with a group of trainees. Below is a workshop training session from Spring 2007 with co-trainers Leslie Opp-Beckman and Kay Westerfield. The workshop was for University of Oregon teachers who planned to train primary-level EFL teachers from Korea.

- [Watch the Video: Workshop training session, Part 1.](#)
- [Watch the Video: Workshop training session, Part 2.](#)

**Teaching and Classroom Observation Checklists**

Available for modules: 01 * 03 * 04 * 05 * 06 * 07 * 08 * 09 * 10 * 11 * 12 [PDFs].

**List of Supplementary Web-based Readings**

For each module, there is also a list of supplementary web-based readings.

**Ordering**

Shaping the Way We Teach English is produced for overseas use and is available in hard copy outside the United States only. For information on availability, contact a Regional English Language Office in your area or your local U.S. Embassy, Public Affairs Section.
Appendix 2.1 - UNISA TEFLA 2014 S2 TEACHING
PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WEBINAR SLIDES
TEFLA 2014 Semester 2
Teaching Portfolio of Evidence

Webinar – 6 September 2014
Why?

• Part of your final practical teaching assessment

• Your portfolio for life

• Job applications
PoE Format

Teaching Portfolio
Your Name
TEFLA Certificate 2014
UNISA
page number

(this header should be placed on every page of your portfolio)
PoE Format

- Table of Contents
- p.8 of the TUT Letter
1. Teaching Responsibilities

• background of the institution or centre where you teach
• a list / schedule of the classes that you taught
• an explanation as to what the lessons entailed, i.e. content & context
• any assessments conducted
• an example of marking that you have done
2. Description of Teaching Philosophy

• Why do you teach?

• Why do you want to be a TEFLA teacher?

• What makes a good teacher, in your opinion?
3. Description of Teaching Methodology

• What teaching methods did you use in the classroom?
• What worked well?
• What did not work so well?
• Give explanations
• Give examples
4. Course Content and Assessments

- course outlines
- sample quizzes
- lesson plans
- other documents that demonstrate your teaching methods
- any assessments conducted in class
5. Teaching Effectiveness

• Evidence that shows your teaching methods are effective:
  – **Peer Assessment of Teaching**
    • Evidence that comes from your peers including observation reports or other comments from peers who have observed your teaching.
  – **Student Assessment of Teaching**
    • Any evidence from your students that demonstrates your students' assessment of your teaching. These can include photos, letters and email correspondence from your students.
6. Teaching Improvement Activities

- Activities that you engage in that help you to be a better teacher.
- These may include things you do in your classes while you actively teach or outside activities including taking online courses.
- In this section, you are required to indicate how you experienced the suggested MOOC and OERs suggested in the TUT Letter by reflecting on the following questions:
  - Did you find the suggested MOOC and OERs useful in your teaching practice? Why / why not?
  - Did the suggested MOOC and OERs enhance the UNISA course material and in what way?
  - Do you think that the suggested MOOC and OERs offered you a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in the global context? Motivate your answer.
7. Future Teaching Goals

• What goals do you have for your future teaching?

• What things would you like to achieve?
8. Appendices (Evidence)

Include exhibits like photos, pictures, slides, videos and posters that are referred to in other sections of this document.

..\Documents\Teaching and Learning\Rona Marx Teaching Portfolio 2012 - Appendix of Evidence.docx
please complete the online survey after the webinar.
Appendix 2.2 -- UNISA TEFLA 2015 S1 TEACHING
PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WEBINAR SLIDES
TEFLA 2015 Semester 1
Teaching Portfolio of Evidence

Webinar –
25 April 2015
Why?

• Part of your final practical teaching assessment – 60% of your final mark  
  (TEFL TUT Letter 102, p.9)

• Your portfolio for life

• Job applications
PoE Format

Teaching Portfolio
Your Name
TEFLA Certificate 2015
UNISA
page number

(this header should be placed on every page of your portfolio)
PoE Format

• Table of Contents

• p.4 of TUT Letter 102

• Two (2) separate sections:
  – TEFL01-06
  – TEFL02-8
1. Teaching Responsibilities
2. Description of Teaching Philosophy
3. Description of Teaching Methodology
4. Course Content and Assessments
1. Teaching Responsibilities

- background of the institution or centre where you teach
- a list / schedule of the classes that you taught
- an explanation as to what the lessons entailed, i.e. content & context
- any assessments conducted
- an example of marking that you have done
2. Description of Teaching Philosophy

- Why do you teach?
- Why do you want to be a TEFLA teacher?
- What makes a good teacher, in your opinion?
3. Description of Teaching Methodology

• What teaching methods did you use in the classroom?
• What worked well?
• What did not work so well?
• Give explanations
• Give examples
4. Course Content and Assessments

- course outlines
- sample quizzes
- lesson plans
- other documents that demonstrate your teaching methods
- any assessments conducted in class
5. Teaching Effectiveness
   a. Peer Assessment of Teaching
   b. Student Assessment of Teaching
6. Teaching Improvement Activities
7. Future Teaching Goals
8. Appendices (Evidence)
5. Teaching Effectiveness

• Evidence that shows your teaching methods are effective:
  – **Peer Assessment of Teaching**
    • Evidence that comes from your peers including observation reports or other comments from peers who have observed your teaching.
  – **Student Assessment of Teaching**
    • Any evidence from your students that demonstrates your students' assessment of your teaching. These can include photos, letters and email correspondence from your students.
6. Teaching Improvement Activities

TUT LETTER 102 p.5

- Activities that you engage in that help you to be a better teacher.
- Things you do in your classes while you actively teach.
- Or outside activities including taking online courses.
- In this section, you are required to indicate how you experienced the suggested MOOC and OERs suggested in the TUT Letter by reflecting on the following questions:

1. a) Did you find the suggested MOOC useful in your teaching practice? Why / why not? Which aspect of the MOOC did you find most useful?
   b) Did you find the suggested OERs useful in your teaching practice? Why / why not? Which OER did you find most useful and why?

2. a) Did the suggested MOOC enhance the UNISA course material and in what way?
   b) Did the suggested OERs enhance the UNISA course material and in what way? Refer to specific OERs in this section.

3. a) Do you think that the suggested MOOC offered you a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in the global context? Motivate your answer.
   b) Do you think that the suggested OERs offered you a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in a global context? Motivate your answer.
7. Future Teaching Goals

- What goals do you have for your future teaching?
- What things would you like to achieve?
Include exhibits like photos, pictures, slides, videos and posters that are referred to in other sections of this document.

../Documents\Teaching and Learning\Rona Marx Teaching Portfolio 2012 - Appendix of Evidence.docx
* please complete the online survey after the webinar.
Thank you
Appendix 3.1 -- TEFLA 2014 S2 PORTFOLIO OF
EVIDENCE WEBINAR - Registration Report
Registration Report

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I heard it and I can see your answer
I am good now
Have a blessed afternoon
Webinar Question 2

yea
I'm not clear on the course - how is this different to a lesson?
Hi i will join on my mobile phone.
Do you have any international experience?
Thank you, Rona!
Must we submit the lesson plans with the assignments or are the lesson plans only for the POE
It is out of 100 marks
I can now
Rona thank you so much
Webinar Response 2
Thanks Daida
Webinar Question 3

If there are specific guidelines on referencing, yes - please email it to us. Or perhaps add it to the resource list on M are we done? Does the portfolio also have prescribed font size like the assignments Yes, I am ok Okay, yes thank you Thank you for awesome experience. I feel much more confident now. I have done some exercises based on web content. I have not referenced them. Do i need to go back and find the bye
Webinar Response 3
Webinar Question 4

Must we give examples of what worked and what didn't work?

pleasure

If we add the appendice the teaching portfolio will then be much bigger than the min 5 pages

No

bye

The TUT letter says 100

It will definately help

yes i can see it
Webinar Response 4

Are you a computer or a mobile phone?
Webinar Question 5

Ok, that makes sense and is clear. Thanks

Rona do I understand correctly, even though there are already 6 sections the portfolio is literally only a summary of Computer
thank your for the webinar it was quite helpful
Yes please! A reference document would help a lot!
Please do
yes it did
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Webinar Response 5</th>
<th>Webinar Question 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can everyone see my screen?</td>
<td>Or only on what worked?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you Rona. Webinar very helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I can't see you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank you. I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Webinar Response 6

Can everyone else hear me?

I hope you can all hear me and see my screen now - I want to proceed.
Webinar Question 7

Thank you Rona, it was helpful to have you explain in more detail what is expected of/from us.

can you repeat the answer to my question?

yes please include me in the email for referencing documenting

bye
Webinar Response 7  Webinar Question 8

Thank you, enjoy the rest of your weekend.

thank you clearer now!

Hi there, you are breaking up quite badly

can hear now
Webinar Response 8

Hi, I am here - you should be able to see my screen
Webinar Question 9

Yes - I can see your answer. 8 pages seem so little for the portfolio to reflect all the aspects that are required.

thank you.

Sounding much better now

cant hear you now
Webinar Response 9  Webinar Question 10  Webinar Response 10

Yes I did, thank you.

thans Rona

You can give both

i see your screen but not the slides
Webinar Question 11

Yes it is - thank you. I can hear you well

yes

sorry - was just trying to get back onto the web page as I had lost it for a moment
Webinar Response 11
Webinar Question 12

Shurnell: must we give examples of what worked and what did not work, or only on what worked?

yes. It seems quite short however. Perhaps silly question. How much weight doe the portfolio carry in comparison?

this was extremely helpful.
Webinar Response 12

The course is the broader concept
Webinar Question 13

Rona can you give us any indication of the average length of the portfolio.

When you give this evidence in your portfolio can you insert your pictures onto that page or do you have to insert it
Webinar Response 13

It varies - about 5-8 pages for assessment

Webinar Question 14

wonderful to have met the other students as well
Webinar Response 14
Appendix 3.3 -- TEFLA 2014 S2 PORTFOLIO OF
EVIDENCE WEBINAR - Survey Report
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Survey Report</th>
<th>TEFLA 2014 S2 PORTFOLIO OF E'</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>154-732-843</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Name</td>
<td>TEFLA PoE Survey</td>
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<td>First Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address</td>
<td>Submitted Date/Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/6/14 1:06 PM CAT</td>
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<td>9/6/14 1:06 PM CAT</td>
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<td>9/6/14 1:10 PM CAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/7/14 3:44 PM CAT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|               | 9/8/14 11:28 AM CAT | SUGGESTIONS:  
1. We could engage in Pre presentation chats to set up and wait for others to be ready. (Pre presentation and post presentation)  
2. Questions could be delayed a little until you pause for questions occasionally. This will let the presentation flow. Yes I did. I thought the information and instructions in the tutorial letter was simple enough but the webinar provided me with useful information and guidance that will allow me to improve my portfolio.
Did you find the technical set-up of this webinar easy to f
Do you think it would be useful to have more webinars for
Definitely. The written word often leaves too much room for interpretation which could result in learner error. The webinar provides the opportunity to clarify one's understanding.
Yes Please

Absolutely. I would have been far better prepared for my two previous teaching practice sessions

Yes. Wish it's incorporated to the whole course where there would be scheduled Webinar for content and others. Human interaction is always better than e-mail and WhatsApp. Though those media are still helpful when communicating with you.

It would be very beneficial to have more webinar sessions.
To what extent has this webinar helped you to understand...
Did you find it helpful to see the other students' questions:

No
Yes

Yes

Maybe

Yes
What device did you use to access the webinar?

Laptop / PC
Laptop / PC

Laptop / PC

Laptop / PC

Laptop / PC
Appendix 3.4 -- TEFLA 2015 S1 PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WEBINAR - Registration Report
### General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Webinar Name</th>
<th>Webinar ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>128-349-123</td>
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<th>Registered</th>
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<th>Scheduled Duration (minutes)</th>
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### Registrants

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<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Apr 16, 2015 4:07 PM CAT</td>
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<td>Apr 14, 2015 7:05 PM CAT</td>
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<td>Apr 13, 2015 6:18 PM CAT</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr 13, 2015 12:17 PM CAT</td>
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</table>
Appendix 3.5 -- TEFLA 2015 S1 PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WEBINAR - Attendee Report
Attendee Report
TEFL 2015 S1 PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WE

Report Generated:
5/5/15 1:34 PM CAT

Webinar ID         Actual Start Date/Time               Duration
128-349-123        4/25/15 1:57 PM CAT                  1 hour 4 minutes

Attendee Details
Attended          Interest Rating
Yes               68
Yes               70
No                0
No                0
No                0
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<td></td>
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# Registered: 5  # Attended: 2  Clicked Registration Link: 12
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<td>33 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Webinar Question 1  Webinar Response 1
Helen van Niekerk  That is fine Helena, I am sure ahe will send it to me.
hi Ms R Marx
Webinar Question 2
ms Marx Can you hear me?
hi Ms Rona, the self evaluation where do we submit?
Webinar Question 3
I can hear you, but can see lecture.
The sound was not clear will there be a audio available

Webinar Response 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Webinar Question 4</th>
<th>Webinar Response 4</th>
<th>Webinar Question 5</th>
<th>Webinar Response 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes I can</td>
<td>Yes please</td>
<td>thank you</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Webinar Question 6  I am happy. Thanks
Webinar Response 6  Webinar Question 7
Is the MOOC by the University of Oregon?
Webinar Response 7  Webinar Question 8  Webinar Response 8
Thanks
Webinar Question 9
How many peer observation and self reflecting evaluations must we submit?
Yes thanks
Webinar Question 11
Professor Lephalale gave me permission to e-mail Assignment 1 and 2 for TEFL 02-8 to her. Thank you
Webinar Response 11  Webinar Question 12

Thank you.
Webinar Response 12
Sure, no problem. I hope you found the webinar useful?
Did you find this webinar useful? Give a brief explanation of your answer.
Yes, I now understand what is expected of me regarding the Teaching Portfolios.
Yes, it is an opportunity to have listening contact with Ms. R. Marx and we are listening to instructions and
Did you find the technical set-up of this webinar easy to follow? Rate from 1 for very difficult to 5 for very easy.

5
4
Do you think it would be useful to have more webinars for the TEFLA course and, if so, on what aspect?

No. A webinar at the start of the course would be sufficient.

Yes, it is useful. I think we can do a grammar question discussion to help re-educate us on what we sh
To what extent has this webinar helped you to understand how to compile your PoE? Rate from 1 for 5.
5
Did you find it helpful to see the other students' questions and comments in the text box?
Unsure.
Yes, it was very helpful.
What device did you use to access the webinar?
I-Pad
My laptop.
Did you find that the presenter gave you useful advice and guidance during the webinar? Please indic:

5

5
Please rate the quality of the visual presentation used by the presenter on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being
5
3
Do you think webinars like this should allow for more interaction from the participants? Please explain.

Yes, you will "meet" fellow students and will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss different topics.

I think it depends on the discussion.
Do you think a webinar like this should be conducted at the start of the semester as an induction for students?

Yes definitely. Students will know if they are in possession of the correct Study Guides, Tutorial Letters etc.

Yes, it would be great help as many students are busy and can overlook new announcements and can...
Have you ever attended a webinar before? If so, how many?
No
I attend a MOOC webinar. On the Bottleneck Hypothesis.
Please provide any further comments and suggestions relevant to this webinar here.

The audio sound was bad on my end. The downloading took twenty minutes, with the MOOC it was a few
ν minutes. It would be good if we know how long it can take to get connected. I was disappointe
I missed 20 minutes of the discussion.
Appendix 3.6 -- TEFLA 2015 S1 PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WEBINAR - Survey Report
Submitted Date/Time
4/26/15 7:41 PM CAT
4/27/15 3:35 PM CAT
Did you find this webinar useful? Give a brief explanation of your answer.
Yes, it is an opportunity to have listening contact with Ms R. Marx and we are listening to instructions and Yes. I now understand what is expected of me regarding the Teaching Portfolios.
Did you find the technical set-up of this webinar easy to follow? Rate from 1 for very difficult to 5 for very easy.

4

5
Do you think it would be useful to have more webinars for the TEFLA course and, if so, on what aspect?

Yes, it is useful. I think we can do a grammar question discussion to help re-educate us on what we should focus on.

No. A webinar at the start of the course would be sufficient.
To what extent has this webinar helped you to understand how to compile your PoE? Rate from 1 for 5 5
Did you find it helpful to see the other students' questions and comments in the text box?
Yes, it was very helpful.
Unsure.
What device did you use to access the webinar?

My laptop.
I-Pad
Did you find that the presenter gave you useful advice and guidance during the webinar? Please indicate:

- [ ] 5

- [ ] 5
Please rate the quality of the visual presentation used by the presenter on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being

3
5
Do you think webinars like this should allow for more interaction from the participants? Please explain.

I think it depends on the discussion.

Yes, you will "meet" fellow students and will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss different tc
Do you think a webinar like this should be conducted at the start of the semester as an induction for students?

Yes, it would be great help as many students are busy and can overlook new announcements and can miss important information.

Yes definitely. Students will know if they are in possession of the correct Study Guides, Tutorial Letters etc.
Have you ever attended a webinar before? If so, how many?
I attend a MOOC webinar. On the Bottleneck Hypothesis.
No
Please provide any further comments and suggestions relevant to this webinar here.

The audio sound was bad on my end. The downloading took twenty minutes, with the MOOC it was a few
w minutes. It would be good if we know how long it can take to get connected. I was disappointe
And I missed 20 minutes of the discussion.
Appendix 3.7 -- TEFLA 2015 S1 PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE WEBINAR - Recording Registrants Report
Recording Registrants Report
May 4, 2015 8:48 PM CAT

Summary
Associated Webinars
--None--

Registrants
Recording Registration Date & Time
May 2, 2015 2:28 PM CAT
May 2, 2015 8:56 AM CAT
May 1, 2015 1:46 PM CAT
April 29, 2015 3:11 PM CAT
April 28, 2015 8:17 PM CAT
April 28, 2015 7:07 PM CAT
April 25, 2015 7:13 PM CAT
April 25, 2015 4:56 PM CAT
EVIDENCE WEBINAR.wmv

Total Recording Registrants

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</table>
Attended the Webinar
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
--Not applicable--
Appendix 4.1 -- TEFLA 2014 S2 PoE Questions and Marking Guide
2.6 The Portfolio [a total mark out of 100 will be awarded]

The Teaching Portfolio of Evidence should be compiled using the following format:

Teaching Portfolio
Your Name
TEFLA Certificate 2014
UNISA

(this header should be placed on every page of your portfolio)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Teaching Responsibilities
2. Description of Teaching Philosophy
3. Description of Teaching Methodology
4. Course content and Assessments
5. Teaching Effectiveness
   a. Peer Assessment of Teaching
   b. Student Assessment of Teaching
6. Teaching Improvement Activities
7. Future Teaching Goals
8. Appendices (Evidence)

1. Teaching Responsibilities

Your teaching responsibilities should begin with some background of the institution or centre where you teach, in order to put your teaching portfolio in context. It should also include a list of the classes that you taught and should provide some explanation as to what the lessons entailed.

2. Description of Teaching Philosophy

This is your personal statement of why you teach.

3. Description of Teaching Methodology

This is a listing of methods you use in your teaching with a brief explanation of each.

4. Course Content and Assessments

This is a collection of the course outlines, assignments, sample quizzes, lesson plans and other documents that demonstrate your teaching methods. Include in this category assessments that have been marked by you.

5. Teaching Effectiveness
Evidence that shows your teaching methods are effective.

a. **Peer Assessment of Teaching**

Evidence that comes from your peers including observation reports or other comments from peers who have observed your teaching.

b. **Student Assessment of Teaching**

Any evidence from your students that demonstrates your students' assessment of your teaching. These can include photos, letters and email correspondence from your students.

6. **Teaching Improvement Activities**

Activities that you engage in that help you to be a better teacher. These may include things you do in your classes while you actively teach or outside activities including online courses. In this section, you are required to indicate how you experienced the suggested MOOC and OERs (refer to 2.1) by reflecting on the following questions:

1. Did you find the suggested MOOC and OERs useful in your teaching practice? Why / why not?
2. Did the suggested MOOC and OERs enhance the UNISA course material and in what way?
3. Do you think that the suggested MOOC and OERs offered you a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in the global context? Motivate your answer.

7. **Future Teaching Goals**

What goals do you have for your future teaching. What things would you like to achieve.

8. **Appendices (Evidence)**

Include exhibits like photos, pictures, slides, videos and posters that are referred to in other sections of this document. 

---

Appendix 4.2 -- TEFLA 2015 S1 PoE QUESTIONS AND MARKING GUIDE
Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Adults

TEFLA PORTFOLIO QUESTIONS AND MARKING GUIDE
SEMESTER 1 2015

The Povey Centre
English Studies Short Learning Programmes
The University of South Africa
The Portfolios of Evidence [a total mark out of 200 will be awarded – 100 marks for each portfolio]

Due Date: Wednesday, 20 May 2015.

There is no written examination for this course. Instead, every student has to submit two Teaching Portfolios of Evidence (one each for TEFL01-06 AND one for TEFL02-08). This is internally examined and externally moderated by experts in the field of English language teaching.

Students who get below 60% for the portfolios of evidence will have to re-register in another semester if they wish to try again. [a total mark out of 200 will be awarded – 100 marks for each portfolio]

The Teaching Portfolio of Evidence should be compiled using the following format:

---

Teaching Portfolio
Your Name
TEFLA Certificate 2015
UNISA

(this header should be placed on every page of your portfolio)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEFL01-06:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Teaching Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your teaching responsibilities should begin with some background of the institution or centre where you teach, in order to put your teaching portfolio in context. It should also include a list of the classes that you taught and should provide some explanation as to what the lessons entailed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Description of Teaching Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is your personal statement of why you teach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Description of Teaching Methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a listing of methods you use in your teaching with a brief explanation of each.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Course Content and Assessments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is a collection of the course outlines, assignments, sample quizzes, lesson plans and other documents that demonstrate your teaching methods. Include in this category assessments that have been marked by you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
---
Marking Guide:

There are four sub-sections in this section. Each section will be marked out of 20, and a mark is also awarded out of 20 for language, in order to make up the total of 100 marks. Assessment will be based on whether all of the components of each section were addressed. For sub-sections 2 and 3, the marking schedule for essays will be used (please refer to the end of this document). Furthermore, in sections 1-3, students need to demonstrate a solid understanding of their duties, responsibilities, teaching philosophies and teaching methodologies. Students should clearly illustrate that they command a sound grasp of the role that a TEFLA teacher is required to fulfil in the real-world classroom context.

Section 4 should illustrate very clearly that students have put some thought and planning into their lessons and that they display creativity in their approach to teaching. Clear evidence is required, in the form of lesson plans and other documents, as listed in the question.

A good command of written English is expected here, so the marking guide below will be closely adhered to.

**TEFL02-8:**

5. **Teaching Effectiveness**

   Evidence that shows your teaching methods are effective.

   a. **Peer Assessment of Teaching**

      Evidence that comes from your peers including observation reports or other comments from peers who have observed your teaching.

   b. **Student Assessment of Teaching**

      Any evidence from your students that demonstrates your students' assessment of your teaching. These can include photos, letters and email correspondence from your students.

6. **Teaching Improvement Activities**

   Activities that you engage in that help you to be a better teacher. These may include things you do in your classes while you actively teach or outside activities including online courses. In this section, you are required to indicate how you experienced the suggested MOOC and OERs (refer to 2.1) by reflecting on the following questions:

1. a) Did you find the suggested MOOC useful in your teaching practice? Why / why not? Which aspect of the MOOC did you find most useful?
b) Did you find the suggested OERs useful in your teaching practice? Why / why not? Which OER did you find most useful and why?

2. a) Did the suggested MOOC enhance the UNISA course material and in what way?
   b) Did the suggested OERs enhance the UNISA course material and in what way? Refer to specific OERs in this section.

3. a) Do you think that the suggested MOOC offered you a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in the global context? Motivate your answer.
   b) Do you think that the suggested OERs offered you a broader understanding of teaching English as a Foreign Language in a global context? Motivate your answer.

7. **Future Teaching Goals**

   What goals do you have for your future teaching? Consider what you would like to achieve.

8. **Appendices (Evidence)**

   Include exhibits like photos, pictures, slides, videos and posters that are referred to in other sections of this document.¹

**Marking Guide:**

Once again, there are four sub-sections in this section. Each section will be marked out of 20, and a mark out of 20 was also awarded for language, in order to make up the total of 100 marks. Assessment will be based on whether **all of the components of each section** were addressed, especially for sub-section 6. The assessment for section 5 will be based on the comments in the peer observations, as well as the depth of the self-evaluation forms. The content of these documents should clearly show development in the learner-teacher, as well as a willingness to reflect and improve teaching methods.

Sub-section 6 should show clearly that the student made extensive use of the additional online learning resources and the application of the learning obtained in these spaces should be clearly illustrated in a well-constructed answer. Clear evidence of application of knowledge gained in the online learning spaces should be illustrated in the answer.

The marking schedule for essays will be applied throughout (please refer to the end of this document), but especially to sub-section 7.

Sub-section 8 should contain evidence of all the documents and activities referred to in the written part of the portfolio. This section should be relevant to the content of the portfolio and presentation of the evidence will also be taken into consideration when allocating marks.

A good command of written English is expected throughout, so the marking guide below will be closely adhered to and the overall mark awarded should be matched carefully to the descriptions in the marking guide.

**TOTAL: 200 MARKS**

*Please note that the content of the portfolios, especially the peer observations, self-reflection forms, lesson plans and evidence of teaching methodology will also be a guide when assessing the students' teaching practical abilities, especially for those students who are in other cities and cannot, for logistical reasons, be assessed in person by the co-ordinator.*

**Assessment criteria for all essays:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANGE</th>
<th>CONTENT &amp; STRUCTURE</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>PRESENTATION</th>
<th>OVERALL COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70-100%</td>
<td>Irrefutable evidence of sound interpretation and knowledge of topic; logical &amp; excellent development of ideas; insightful and original expression; highly selective supporting details; captivating introduction &amp; highly convincing conclusion.</td>
<td>Excellent command of grammatical structures; skilful/sophisticated use of diction and linking devices to illustrate coherence, purpose and register.</td>
<td>Outstanding; exceptionally neat and legible; clearly defined paragraphs.</td>
<td>Excellent - Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-70%</td>
<td>Sound understanding and knowledge of topic; convincing presentation of topic; concerted effort at originality; relevant supporting details.</td>
<td>Very good command of grammatical structures; wide range of vocabulary, linking devices and sentence structures; meaning seldom hindered by grammatical errors.</td>
<td>Well structured essay; clearly defined paragraphs; neat &amp; legible.</td>
<td>Good – Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-35%</td>
<td>Very little evidence to no understanding &amp; knowledge of given topic. Very little understanding of essay writing skills. Fragmented/disjointed/muddled ideas. Too little information.</td>
<td>Poor command of vocabulary, sentence structure &amp; punctuation. No knowledge of grammatical structures.</td>
<td>Cluttered presentation, Illegible handwriting/ poorly typed. Incorrect and inconsistent spacing.</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Marking Code**

When assessing your essays, markers use the following codes in addition to written feedback.

- **abb** *Abbreviation* - Do not use abbreviations, or contractions (such as 'can't,' 'don't,' 'etc.') in formal writing (eg a written assignment).

  A plural subject takes a plural verb: The students read the book.
  A singular subject takes a singular verb: The student reads the book.

- **agr (s/v)** *Agreement error* - Your verb does not agree with your subject in number. Check whether your subject is singular or plural.

- **amb** *Ambiguity* - Your statement could have two meanings. Rephrase.

- **ap** *Apostrophe error* - An apostrophe is a comma that hangs above the line.

- **arg** *Argument* - Your argument/explanation is not methodical/coherent/relevant. A clear and logical line of thought needs to emerge.

- **art** *Article error* - You have used 'a' instead of 'the,' or 'the' instead of 'a,' or you have omitted to use 'a' or 'the' where you should have. Alternatively, you have used 'a' or 'the' with a word that should not have an article.

- **awk** *Awkward phrasing* - Your sentence sounds awkward and clumsy. You need to revise word choice and word order.

- **cap** *Capital letter* - The word should begin with a capital letter, either because it starts off a sentence, or because it is a proper noun.
c/s Comma splice - You have joined two ideas (i.e. two separate sentences) without using a connecting word or proper punctuation. Either add a connecting word, or change the comma to a semi-colon, or break the comma-spliced sentence into two separate sentences.

exp Expression faulty - Your sentence is difficult to understand because of errors too numerous to list.

frag Fragmentary sentence - Your sentence does not have a verb, and therefore is only a fragment of a sentence.

inc Incomplete sentence - You have left out part of the sentence.

irr Irrelevant - What you have said has nothing to do with the topic.

L?/ill Logic faulty/illogical - Illogical, or your writing does not make sense here.

N.P.{ New Paragraph - You have started discussing a new idea. You need a new paragraph.

Para Paragraph structure - A paragraph consists of a main idea (usually expressed in a topic sentence) and several supporting sentences which explain the main idea, or give examples and/or details concerning the main idea. Single-sentence paragraphs are not acceptable because a single sentence cannot develop or expand the main idea. Your paragraph is too long and needs to be divided where appropriate.

p Punctuation - You have misused a punctuation mark, or omitted one where it was necessary.

sp Spelling - You have misspelt a word. Try to get into the habit of using a dictionary consistently.

T Tense error - Your verb is in the wrong tense.

voc/ Vocabulary error/ - You have used the wrong word or you could have used a better one. (Look up the word you have used in the dictionary. You will find that its meaning is either not correct or not appropriate in your sentence.)

wdy Wordiness - You have used too many words to say something which could be said far more simply and concisely.

WO Word Order incorrect - The words in your sentence are in the wrong place. Your marker will have used arrows to indicate where the word(s) should go.

---

**Final results**

The final mark for this course is based on both written work and the practical teaching sessions, with the latter carrying more weight. The division of work and the weighting is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments:</th>
<th>Teaching practice and Portfolios of Evidence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

6
The certificate is issued with the following grades:

*Pass A+; Pass A; Pass B+; Pass B; Pass C+; Pass C; Pass*

The certificate is accompanied by a report on each student’s performance on the course. This report, along with the Teaching Portfolio of Evidence, can be used as a reference when applying for a job. Students who do not pass will receive a report, but no certificate.

**The final results will be completed 3-4 weeks after the end of the course.**
Appendix 5 -- TEFLA 2014 S2 CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT
The Povey Centre

TEFLA 2014, SEMESTER 2 – CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

1. Background:

The study material for the TEFLA course during semester 2 of 2014 remained unchanged and the study guides TEFL01-06 Study Guide 2013 and TEFL02-8 Study Guide 2013 were used. The TUT Letter was edited and amended in order to reflect the schedules and tasks required for completion of the course during semester 2. However, after careful consideration, a few new aspects of delivery, as well as course work were introduced. (Please refer to the Povey Centre administrative office for copies of the Study Guides. Due to large file sizes, these cannot be included here.)

2. Programme amendments:

2.1 The study guides, as well as the TUT Letter were posted on myUnisa and students were granted access to this portal upon completion of registration.

2.2 A discussion forum was created on myUnisa, with prompts from the course co-ordinator.

2.3 Regular announcements were posted on myUnisa with information relevant to the course work.

2.4 A TEFL specific MOOC (Mass Open Online Course) was suggested to students, namely http://www.learningadvisor.com/courses/8929/basic-tefl-certificate-course. The aim of introducing this MOOC was to offer an additional resource for students for improving their teaching skills by taking an online course. This course offers practical teaching videos, as well as written course work, in order to help students to improve their own teaching skills. However, it came to light that there was a fee of US$ 55 for taking this course, and students were promptly informed via e-mail, as well as per an announcement on the TEFLA myUnisa site to take an alternative MOOC instead, namely http://oelp.uoregon.edu/shaping. This MOOC offered better content and training videos, and was free of charge.

2.5 Three OERs (Open Education Resources) were also introduced, namely: Open Equal Free; Exploring English Language and Culture; British Council - Learn English. (Click on the hyperlinks to access the OERs). The aim of introducing these additional resources, was to provide students with access to course-related sources of information, particularly helpful in improving their own written English, as well as improving their knowledge of English grammar in view of teaching content.
2.6 A practical teaching component was introduced, in which students were required to teach a minimum of 20 hours of practical teaching sessions during the semester. For those students in the Gauteng area, the Bright Site project was suggested as a suitable institution for these practical sessions. For students outside of the Gauteng area, it was expected of students to find an institution in their area where the practical teaching sessions could be completed.

2.7 A Teaching Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) was also introduced as a final assessment. This portfolio carried a weighting of 50% toward the students’ final marks. (Please refer to Annexure 1 for the TUT Letter)

2.8 With the PoE in mind, a free webinar was scheduled on a Saturday, during which an attempt was made at synchronous learning for students from all areas. The topic of the webinar was the compiling of an effective PoE. The webinar was created / scheduled and links sent via e-mail to all students. Participants could then register and, at the scheduled time, all participants could log on at the same time. The co-ordinator's voice could be heard, and a PowerPoint presentation was visible to all participants at the same time. Participants were able to post questions and comments in a text box that was visible on the co-ordinator's screen. Participants accessed the webinar via laptop, PC, tablet and mobile phone. (Recording and reports of the webinar available upon request. Due to the large file sizes, it is not possible to annex these resources here.)

3. Findings:

Overall, most students seemed to find it difficult to negotiate their way around the online learning resources. Students did not seem as digitally literate as expected, and required a lot of assistance from the course co-ordinator in this regard. Students also did not seem to read instructions very carefully and a lot of information had to be explained and repeated a number of times. This seemed to be a challenge for all of the registered students. From the programme amendments above, it was further found that:

3.1 Some students had initial difficulties in accessing the TEFLA myUnisa site. However, this was admirably resolved by Mr Lucas Molepo.

3.2 The discussion forum was active initially, but students stopped participating in the discussions after about one month. This might be due to students preferring to contact the co-ordinator directly via e-mail and WhatsApp™. It also became apparent that some students preferred to contact each other directly, as they must have exchanged contact information privately.

3.3 The regular announcements were popular with some of the students however, a number of students found difficulty with the system and so preferred direct
communication with the course co-ordinator. Some students also indicated that they did not access their e-mails, nor the internet, that regularly. These students preferred WhatsApp™ communication with the co-ordinator.

3.4 Most students found the MOOC very useful and instructive and of direct relevance to their course work and teaching practical sessions.

3.5 Some of the students embraced the suggested OERs and incorporated these sources into their own development. This was evident from the improvement in their assignment writing skills. However, some of the students did not make use of these resources and seemed reluctant to access these resources. These were also the students who did not show much improvement in their assignment submissions.

3.6 The practical teaching component was embraced by the students in Gauteng, as well as some of the students who were already teaching at various institutions. However, some of the students found it very difficult to find institutions who would accommodate their teaching practical requirements, and one of the students did not find a placement at all. Some institutions also demanded a fee for the practical teaching sessions. A number of students also found it challenging to incorporate the practical teaching requirement into their current jobs and two of the students dropped out of the course, seemingly due to the perceived heavy teaching practical requirement. Efforts were made by the TEFLA team to accommodate the practical teaching requirements and adjust these according to each student's individual challenges.

3.7 The PoE proved challenging for most students, but the feedback from the students was mostly positive, as they regard it as a valuable document in assisting their applications for teaching positions in the TEFLA environment.

3.8 The webinar was very well received and most of the students registered and participated. There were a few technical difficulties, but these were soon resolved. Unfortunately, the recording of the webinar could not be sent to students, nor posted on myUnisa, due to its large file size (58MB). The students were very disappointed about this. However, the PowerPoint presentation was e-mailed to all participants after the webinar.

4. Conclusions:

Students are not as digitally literate as one might expect in the current environment of advanced technology. Furthermore, the students required almost constant attention and feedback from the course co-ordinator, including assistance with negotiating the online learning environment, as well as explanation of course content, and also questions regarding the assignment questions. This proved to be extremely time-intensive for the co-ordinator. From the findings above, it may further be concluded that:
4.1 Students require technical support in the online learning environment of myUnisa.
4.2 Students seem to prefer direct communication with each other, as well as with the course co-ordinator.
4.3 The use of WhatsApp™ is more popular than any other method of communication.
4.4 The MOOC was helpful as an additional resource for learning.
4.5 The OERs were not as popular as the MOOC and students need more encouragement to fully utilise these sources. It may further be concluded that students do not always have free access to the internet, which could be a challenge in making this component of the course a requirement.
4.6 The practical teaching component was very successful, but some of the students in areas outside of Gauteng may find it more challenging to find institutions where they can complete their practical teaching component free of charge.
4.7 The PoE is a valuable tool of assessment, as it encompasses all aspects of the TEFLA course. It is also a useful document in the students' search for employment.
4.8 The webinar was a success and some students requested more webinars on various topics relevant to the course material.

5. Recommendations for 2015:

Students' level of digital literacy should be carefully considered and a way found in which assistance can be offered to students who have difficulties in this regard. Students should also be tested on their English proficiency before being allowed to register for this course, as the understanding of written English is imperative for this course. Not only as far as reading of instructions is concerned, but also as far as written work for assignments is assessed.

Due to the time-intensity required from the co-ordinator, it is suggested that a monthly retainer be paid to the co-ordinator for the performance of his or her duty, especially with reference to constant student communication and assistance to students at all times of the week and weekend hours. From the conclusions above, it may further be recommended that:

5.1 The new methods of communication and learning be retained and further developed in 2015;
5.2 The MOOC and OERs be retained in the course offering, and further incorporated via specific assessment questions in the assignments;
5.3 The practical teaching component be retained and further developed in 2015, especially as far as the Povey Centre can offer assistance to students in areas outside of Gauteng, in finding appropriate placements;

5.4 Students be provided with a brochure before registration, in order to be transparent as to the requirements involved in completing the course. This will prevent students being disillusioned regarding the intensity of the course, as well as the time and effort required from the course;

5.5 The PoE be retained as an assessment tool, and further developed in 2015, so that all of the course content aspects be thoroughly assessed in this document; and

5.6 More webinars be conducted regularly in order to improve synchronous learning opportunities. Furthermore, it is recommended that The Povey Centre investigate a method or vehicle for making the webinar recordings available to students, taking into consideration the large file size of such recordings.

Rona Marx (Ms)

TEFLA 2014 S2 Course Co-ordinator

9 December 2014
Appendix 6 -- TEFLA 2015 S1 CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT
The Povey Centre

TEFLA 2015, SEMESTER 1 – CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

1. Background:

The study material for the TEFLA course during semester 1 of 2015 remained unchanged and the study guides TEFL01-06 Study Guide 2013 and TEFL02-8 Study Guide 2013 were used. The TUT Letter was edited and amended in order to reflect the split of the programme into the two separate modules, TEFL01-6 and TEFL02-08. The instruction for this split was received after registration and so the TUT Letters had to be drawn up within a severely restricted time frame. As will be seen later in this report, this led to an error regarding submission on myUnisa, which caused some confusion for students and administrators alike. (Please refer to Annexures 1 and 2 for the TUT Letters for both modules.)

2. Registered Students' Performance:

This information has been removed in order to protect the students' identities.

3. Programme outline:

3.1 The study guides, as well as the TUT Letter, were initially posted on myUnisa and students were granted access to this portal upon completion of registration.

3.2 A discussion forum was created on myUnisa, with prompts from the course co-ordinator.

3.3 Regular announcements were posted on myUnisa with information relevant to the course work.

3.4 The new TUT letters with assignment instructions were only posted after most of the students had already registered and, although announcements were posted, alerting students to the fact that the module had been split into two separate modules, some students downloaded and worked on the original TUT Letter.

3.5 The same TEFL specific MOOC (Mass Open Online Course) that was introduced in S2 of 2014 was suggested to students in S1 of 2015, namely http://oelp.uoregon.edu/shaping. The aim of suggesting this MOOC was to offer an additional resource for
students for improving their teaching skills by taking an online course. This free course offers practical teaching videos, as well as written course work, in order to help students to improve their own teaching skills.

3.6 The same three OERs (Open Education Resources) that were introduced in S2 of 2014 were also suggested for S1 of 2015, namely: Open Equal Free; Exploring English Language and Culture; British Council - Learn English. (Click on the hyperlinks to access the OERs). The aim of suggesting these additional resources was to provide students with access to course-related sources of information, particularly helpful in improving their own written English, as well as improving their knowledge of English grammar in view of teaching content.

3.7 The practical teaching component that was introduced in S2 of 2014 was, once again, introduced as a requirement for the completion of the programme in S1 of 2015. In this component, students were required to teach a minimum of 20 hours of practical teaching sessions during the semester. For those students in the Gauteng area, the Bright Site project was suggested as a suitable institution for these practical sessions. For students outside of the Gauteng area, it was expected of students to find an institution in their area where the practical teaching sessions could be completed.

3.8 The Teaching Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) that was introduced in S2 of 2014 was also retained in S1 of 2015 as a final assessment. This portfolio carried a weighting of 50% toward the students' final marks. (Please refer to Annexures 1 and 2 for the TUT Letters containing PoE instructions and requirements).

3.9 With the PoE in mind, a free webinar, hosted by an independent service provider, was scheduled on a Saturday, during which an attempt was made at synchronous learning for students from all areas. Unfortunately, the UNISA online learning portal, myUnisa, does not currently offer the facility for hosting a webinar of this sort. The topic of the webinar was the compiling of an effective PoE. The webinar was created / scheduled and details were posted in an announcement on the myUnisa portal; links to the webinar registration were also sent via e-mail to all students. Participants could then register and, at the scheduled time, all participants could log on at the same time. The co-ordinator's voice could be heard, and a PowerPoint presentation was visible to all participants at the same time. Participants were able to post questions and comments in a text box that was visible on the co-ordinator's screen. Participants accessed the webinar via laptop, PC, tablet and mobile phone. (Recording of the webinar is available upon request. Due to the large file size, it is not possible to annex the recording here.)
4. Findings:

Overall, most students seemed to find it difficult to negotiate their way around the online learning resources. Students did not seem as digitally literate as expected, and most of the students did not access the myUnisa portal regularly. (Please refer to figures 1 and 2 for statistical evidence of student activity on the myUnisa portal.) Students also did not seem to read instructions very carefully and a lot of information had to be explained and repeated a number of times on the discussion forum. This seemed to be a challenge for all of the registered students. Furthermore, new UNISA regulations prevented students from contacting the co-ordinator directly (as they did in the previous year) because the co-ordinator is not a full-time employee of the institution. This caused some communication problems, as some students did not want to interact on the discussion forum only. Students were advised, via a posting on the discussion forum, as well as in an announcement on the myUnisa portal, to contact the lecturers and administrative staff at The Povey Centre directly instead. A document, containing the relevant contact details, was posted on the myUnisa sites.

From the programme outline above, it was further found that:

4.1 Some students had initial difficulties in accessing the TEFLA myUnisa site. However, this was admirably resolved by Mr Lucas Molepo.

4.2 Some students were active on the discussion forum from the onset. However, some students did not participate in this online activity at all, and the overall marks seem to indicate that those students, who were most active on the discussion forum, achieved higher marks. (Please refer to figures 1 and 2 for activity reports.)

4.3 Regular announcements were posted on myUnisa with information relevant to the course work. However, the myUnisa activity report indicates that not all students viewed the announcements regularly. (Please refer to figures 3 to 6 for activity reports.)

4.4 Due to the compiling and posting of the new TUT Letters, incorporating the required split into two modules (TEFL01-6 and TEFL02-8 separately), after some of the students had already registered and downloaded the original TUT letter from the myUnisa site, confusion crept in and students did not submit the correct assignments in the correct place and within the due date deadline requirements. The Povey Centre afforded all students the opportunity to resubmit assignments in order to rectify this error. Assignment submissions via e-mail were also allowed, as the myUnisa site did not contain enough submission portals. This
was due to an error on the part of the co-ordinator, who incorrectly indicated assignment requirements in the revised TUT letter. This error can be assigned due to the short time allowed for revision of the TUT letters.

4.5 Some students found the MOOC very useful and instructive and of direct relevance to their course work and teaching practical sessions. However, it seems that some of the other students, who did not perform all that well in their PoEs, did not take the MOOC.

4.6 Some of the students embraced the suggested OERs and incorporated these sources into their own development. This was evident from the improvement in their assignment writing skills. However, some of the students did not make use of these resources and seemed reluctant to access these resources. These were also the students who did not show much improvement in their assignment submissions.

4.7 The practical teaching component was embraced by the students in Gauteng, as well as some of the students who were already teaching at various institutions. However, some of the students found it very difficult to arrange practical sessions due to work commitments and other logistical challenges. Efforts were made by the TEFLA team to accommodate the practical teaching requirements and adjust these according to each student's individual challenges.

4.8 The students who posted enquiries regarding the PoE; who attended the webinar and/or watched the recording of the webinar (details of which were posted on the myUnisa sites); who reviewed the slides posted on the myUnisa sites, performed very well in their PoEs. On the other hand, the students who did not take these steps did not perform well in their PoEs. The PoE proved challenging for most students, but the feedback from the students was mostly positive, as they regard it as a valuable document in assisting their applications for teaching positions in the TEFLA environment.

4.9 The webinar was not very well received and only a few of the students registered and participated. There were a few technical difficulties, and this was due to students not understanding the requirements of attending the webinar. This difficulty could also be due to the fact that an outsourced webinar provider had to be used, as the myUnisa portal does not currently offer this facility. (Please refer to Annexure 3 for Webinar Registration Report.)
5. Conclusions:

Students are not as digitally literate as one might expect in the current environment of advanced technology. Furthermore, the students registered for this semester did not seem to quite grasp the availability of and access to information on the myUnisa sites. From the findings above, it may further be concluded that:

5.1 Students require technical support in the online learning environment of myUnisa.
5.2 Students seem to struggle with the digital platforms, such as the discussion forum and announcements on myUnisa.
5.3 The MOOC was helpful as an additional resource for learning for those students who embraced it.
5.4 The OERs were not as popular as the MOOC and students need more encouragement to fully utilise these sources. It may further be concluded that students do not always have free access to the internet, which could be a challenge in making this component of the course a requirement.
5.5 The practical teaching component was very successful, but some of the students in areas outside of Gauteng may find it more challenging to find institutions where they can complete their practical teaching component free of charge.
5.6 The PoE is a valuable tool of assessment, as it encompasses all aspects of the TEFLA course. It is also a useful document in the students' search for employment.
5.7 The webinar was not a great success, due to students' challenges with negotiating their way around the digital learning spaces. However, those students who did attend or watch the recording of it requested more webinars on various topics relevant to the course material.

6. Recommendations for S2 of 2015:

Students' level of digital literacy should be carefully considered and a way found in which assistance can be offered to students who have difficulties in this regard. Students should also be tested on their English proficiency before being allowed to register for this course, as the understanding of written English is imperative for this course. Not only as far as reading of instructions is concerned, but also as far as written work for assignments is assessed.
Due to the time-intensity required from the co-ordinator, it is suggested that a monthly retainer be paid to the co-ordinator for the performance of his or her duty, especially with reference to constant student communication and assistance to students at all times of the week and weekend hours. From the conclusions above, it may further be recommended that:

6.1 All students be urged to register for and visit the myUnisa portal upon registration;
6.2 A webinar or podcast be recorded and made available to all students on the myUnisa sites in order to guide them in the navigation of the digital learning spaces, as well as the use of myUnisa;
6.3 The new methods of communication and learning be retained and further developed in 2015, by means of more discussion forum activity to be encouraged through incorporating it as a requirement for marks in all of the assignments;
6.4 More webinars be conducted regularly in order to improve synchronous learning opportunities, help with negotiation of digital learning spaces; as well as assistance with assignment questions. Furthermore, it is recommended that The Povey Centre investigate a method or vehicle for making the webinar recordings available to students, taking into consideration the large file size of such recordings;
6.5 The MOOC and OERs be retained in the course offering, and further incorporated via continued specific assessment questions in the assignments;
6.6 The practical teaching component be retained and further developed in 2015, especially as far as the Povey Centre can offer assistance to students in areas outside of Gauteng, in finding appropriate placements;
6.7 Students should be provided with a brochure before registration, in order to be transparent as to the requirements involved in completing the course. This will prevent students being disillusioned regarding the intensity of the course, as well as the time and effort required from the course;
6.8 The PoE be retained as an assessment tool, and further developed in 2015, so that all of the course content aspects be thoroughly assessed in this document; and
6.9 A proficiency test should be completed by all students prior to final registration, in order to establish their ability to read-, write, speak- and listen sufficiently in English.
Annexures 1, 2 and 3 are attached as separate documents.

Some information has been removed here in order to protect students' identities.
Appendix 7 -- Ethical Clearance Certificate
RESEARCH PERMISSION SUB-COMMITTEE OF SRIHDC

22 May 2015

Dear Ms Rona Marx,

**Decision: Research Permission Approval** for the period **May 2015 to 31 March 2016**

Principal Investigator:
Ms Rona Marx
Department of English Studies
School of Arts
College of Human Sciences
UNISA
ronamarp@gmail.com
082 561 6038

Supervisor: Prof M. M. K. Lephalala
lephammk@unisa.ac.za
(012) 429-6396/082 413 3012

A study titled: “The use of MOOCs and Webinars to enhance student learning in English as a Foreign Language (TEFLA) Course: A case of a short learning programme in a Distance Education Environment.”

Your application regarding permission to conduct research involving UNISA students in respect of the above study has been received and was considered by the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC) of the UNISA Senate Research and Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee (SRIHDC) on 15 May 2015.

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission has been granted for the study to:

1. Gain access to the email addresses of students registered for TEFLA 2014 and TEFLA 2015 through the gatekeeping assistance of your supervisor, Prof M.K.K. Lephalala, to
invite the selected students to participate in the study as set out in the application.

2. The RPSC advises the researcher to request permission from the prospective participants to access their assignments and portfolios of evidence, and to use their feedback after the Webinar sessions. The students' portfolios are owned by the students and only they can give permission to the researcher to access their portfolios and to use their feedback after the Webinar sessions. Therefore, the researcher may only use the Webinar feedback of those students that have given the researcher this permission, and this activity may only commence after the students’ permission has been obtained.

You are requested to submit a report of the study to the Research Permission Subcommittee (RPSC@unisa.ac.za) within 12 months of completion of the study.

Note:
The personal (and institutional) information made available to the researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) will only be used for the advancement of this research project as indicated and for the purpose as described in this permission letter. The researcher(s)/gatekeeper(s) must take all appropriate precautionary measures to protect the personal information given to him/her/them in good faith and it must not be passed on to third parties.

The reference number 2015_RPSC_030 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants and the Research Permission Subcommittee.

We would like to wish you well in your research undertaking.

Kind regards,

______________________________
PROF L LABUSCHAGNE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH
Tel: +27 12 429 6368 / 2446
Email: llabus@unisa.ac.za
Appendix 8 -- Students' Consent Forms
Introducing a MOOC and a Webinar to enhance a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFLA) Course in a Distance Education Environment: A case study of a short learning programme.

I have read and understood the contents of the information letter and I understand that my involvement is this project is voluntary and that I will not receive any compensation for it.

Please indicate your choice:

I agree to take part in the research: ☒ No

Name: Willem Scheepers Date: 24/06/2015

Signature: ___________________
Dear Research Participant

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project in which I will try to assess the effectiveness of introducing a MOOC and a webinar as part of the learning strategy of the TEFLA programme to our students. I will analyse the usefulness of the MOOC and the webinar; assess the assignments, as well as the Teaching Portfolio of Evidence; and track the feedback on the MOOC and the webinar in all written communication from students. These analyses will be anonymous and your personal details will not be made public.

Please note that you will not be paid or given any other form of compensation for taking part in this research.

I am attached as a researcher at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and you can find my contact information below.

Please note that your participation in this research project is voluntary, which means you do not have to take part at all; you may refuse to have your work analysed (without providing reasons) or withdraw from the research at any stage. Your participation is regarded as confidential and your identity will only be divulged with your permission.

Please indicate your permission to take part in this research by completing the attached form of consent and returning it to me via e-mail.

I hope to publish the findings on this research project in academic journals, books and possibly in the popular media as well. I would gladly share such publications with you if you wish to read it.

Yours faithfully

Rona Marx
The Povey Centre
Department of English Studies
UNISA
ronamarc@gmail.com
082 561 6038
Introducing a MOOC and a Webinar to enhance a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFLA) Course in a Distance Education Environment: A case study of a short learning programme.

I have read and understood the contents of the information letter and I understand that my involvement is this project is voluntary and that I will not receive any compensation for it.

Please indicate your choice:

I agree to take part in the research: Yes No

Name: Shurnell Andersson Date: June 24 2015

Signature: "J. Andersson"
Consent

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Please indicate your choice:

I agree to take part in the research: [ ] Yes [X] No

Name: Clifford Agyei
Signature: 
Date: 30-06-15
Rona I did think I will be in the position to scan your consent form, but I couldn’t. However you have my consent. This email should serve a letter of consent.

Thank you
Marutla
0724020606
0749107300

Sent from my Sony Xperia™ smartphone

Rona Marx <ronamarx@gmail.com> wrote:

Thank you very much, Marutla!

Warm regards,

Rona

Rona Marx
082 561 6038

Please consider your impact on our environment before printing this e-mail - REDUCE RE-USE RECYCLE
Dear TEFLA Students,

I am currently conducting research with the aim to improve the way that we offer the TEFLA course to our students, and I would like to request your assistance by allowing me to analyse your written work.

I would like to invite you to take part in this research project in which I will try to assess the effectiveness of introducing a MOOC and a webinar as part of the learning strategy of the TEFLA programme to our students. I will analyse the usefulness of the MOOC and the webinar; assess the assignments, as well as the Teaching Portfolio of Evidence; and track the feedback on the MOOC and the webinar in all written communication from students. These analyses will be anonymous and your personal details will not be made public.

I would be most grateful if you could provide me with your consent by completing and signing the attached consent form and returning it by 30 June 2015 (if possible).

Warm regards,

Rona

Rona Marx
082 561 6038

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Please indicate your choice:

I agree to take part in the research: [ ] Yes [ ] No

Name: [Signature] Date: 22-06-15

Signature: [Signature]
academic journals, books and possibly in the popular media as well. I would gladly share such publications with you if you wish to read it.

Yours
faithfully

Rona Marx
The Povey Centre
Department of English Studies
UNISA
ronam Marx@gmail.com
082 561 6038

Consent

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Name: ASGARIE PANGARKER

Date: 25/06/15

Signature: [Signature]