

Challenges of the LIS Educator at an Open Distance University (ODL)

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LIS RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

FLORIDA, JOHANNESBURG

24-25 JULY 2014

AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. External factors
3. Institutional imperatives (survival and growth)
4. The ODL student
5. The LIS Educator (output generator)

1. Introduction

- UNISA is the largest ODL institution in South Africa and on the African continent (approximately 250 thousand students) (UNISA Annual Report 2012).
- Originally ODL intended to provide an attractive option for students who could not afford to attend university immediately after completing their schooling (Vergidis & Panagiotakopoulos 2002).
- However, the orientation of ODL has shifted from catering particularly for the working patrons, to the latest trend of opening up learning opportunities to a young generation of students who have just completed high school education.

1. Introduction cont...

- LIS education and training in Africa, having the responsibility of providing qualified staff for the library and information professions, is currently challenged to ensure that graduates have competencies that align the profession with current trends and perspectives but are relevant to the economic and social realities of the continent's inhabitants (Minishi-Majanja, 2009).

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PEST FACTORS

LIS PRACTICE AND EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

LOCAL AND GLOBAL ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

STUDENTS

- Legislation, policies and funding
- Widening access – massification increasing participation
- Standards - Admission criteria
- Setting targets - critical skills gap

LIS education
LIS has an identity crisis;
Core curriculum;
Multidisciplinary to interdisciplinarity;
Match market and societal needs;
Theory vs practice

LIS EDUCATOR
(Teaching, research and community engagement)

LIS EDUCATOR

- Semesterisation;
- Large numbers of mostly underprepared students;
- Develop new teaching methodologies;
- THROUGHPUT; completion rates; (QUALITY?)
- Publish or perish

OUTPUT, QUALITY, ETHICS, RELEVANCE, REPUTATION, EXCELLENCE, COMPLIANCE, NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIP, INNOVATIVENESS & COMPETITIVENESS

UNISA student: 250 000

- Virtual; faceless; geographically dispersed & diverse
- Working student
- Young cohort or matriculants



PULLED

IN TOO

MANY

DIRECTIONS

winnett



2. Conclusion

- The autonomy and power of the LIS educator is limited.
- LIS departments diverse programmes using diverse methodologies.
- Our professional association, LIASA can play a meaningful role in creating stability and strategic direction in LIS education.

THANK YOU.....

