

Africanisation of the South African archival curriculum: A preliminary study of undergraduate courses in an open distance e-learning environment

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Educators and archivists in Africa have repeatedly raised the need for redeveloping university curricula to reflect local and global best practice. An African education curriculum case study by the InterPARES project (2013–2018) that covered 38 countries out of 54 revealed the existence of few available archival training programmes in the continent. Literature further reveals that where educational programmes are available, the curriculum is mostly Eurocentric and thereby addresses archival issues from a Western perspective. As a result, the infinite problems facing archivists on the continent such as resources, skills, technology, infrastructure, advocacy, holdings, collaboration, displaced archives and many more (the list is endless) are not fully engaged. The archival programmes at the institution of higher learning appear not to address grand societal challenges such as unaccountability, poor governance, service delivery, as well as the low usage of archives repositories in the continent. In South Africa, there has been a call to use African epistemologies such as Ubuntu, a philosophy that provides an African overview of societal relations or the Batho Pele, principles adopted by the post-apartheid South African government to guide and direct its public service and address imbalances of the apartheid regime. This study utilised the Africanisation pillar of Sibanda (2016)'s model to analyse the infusion of curriculum transformation into the ten modules for archives and records management in an open distance e-learning (ODEL) environment. In this regard, the content of ten archives and records management modules for a bachelor's degree in an ODeL environment is analysed to explore the transformation of archival curriculum. Only one university in South Africa offers a fully-fledged bachelor's degree with a major in archives and records management. The study established that an attempt was made to transform the archival curriculum at study material development and module delivery level. This resulted in a missed opportunity to transform archival curriculum in the development of the new bachelor's degree being implemented in 2017. The study concludes by arguing that failure to decolonise the archival curriculum will result in archivists being highly unlikely to contribute to solutions to societal problems that are difficult to solve confronting South Africa using local solutions. It is recommended that transformation of the curriculum should start at a programme level rather than module level.

Keywords: Archives, curriculum, education, decolonisation, open distance e-learning

1. Introduction and background to the problem

Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa (1994), there have been numerous calls to transform curricula at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in order to redress

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the injustices of the past. The first attempt at curriculum reform was introduced to schools in 1998, termed 'Curriculum 2005' (C2005). This was an attempt to break away from the apartheid education system (1948–1993) based on rote learning and memorisation. The project was not successful for several reasons, such as lack of alignment between school curriculum and teacher education in universities as teachers were not prepared for the new curriculum.

To understand the necessity for curriculum transformation in the South African higher education system, reference should be made to South Africa's complex history. South Africa was colonised by the Dutch in 1652, who later lost power to the British in 1795. This was followed by several conflicts and wars between the Dutch settlers and the British, as well as the indigenous people. In 1910, the Union of South Africa emerged, whereby the four colonies of the British and the Dutch settlers united under one government. This changed in 1948, when the National Party introduced the apartheid regime (Louw, 2010; Ngoepe & Keakopa, 2011). The regime enforced their ideology of separate development, which led to severe inequalities among the racial groups in relation to housing, health, education and other socio-economic factors (Seabi et al., 2017). It is no secret that the Dutch settlers, British colonialists and the apartheid regime used education as a tool of oppression in South Africa (Saurombe, 2018). There was a perception that Africans cannot produce knowledge, and that they were to be taught and groomed to serve rather than lead, as they were incapable of thinking. This was perpetuated through the education system (Louw, 2010). As a result, there has been a call for the curriculum to be transformed in South Africa.

At institutions of higher learning, the call for transformation was accentuated by the student uprising of 2015 named the 'Fees Must Fall' movement. Fees Must Fall was a student protest movement that began in mid-October 2015 to stop increases in student fees, as well as to increase government funding of universities. Although the focus of the protests was initially on fees, decolonisation of curricula at institutions of higher learning later became the focal point. Decolonising the curriculum and free higher education became the slogans and demands of the day. As we will show later in this article, it should be noted that although the terms 'transformation', 'decolonisation' and 'Africanisation' of the curriculum are often used interchangeably by most of the students, academics and universities participating in this discourse in South Africa, there are various distinct uses of these terms at present.

The protests forced many South African institutions to evaluate the programmes they offer in order to align with the demands. Demands to decolonise curricula in South Africa were aimed at forcing institutions of higher learning to incorporate different ways of knowing in their curricula, and acknowledge that indigenous knowledge, culture, heritage and languages also formed an important part of the African society (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012; Higgs & Venter, 2004).

The need to decolonise curricula also spread to the archives and records management arena in South Africa. This was also partially as a result of complaints by several scholars such as Katuu (2015), Ngoepe and Katuu (2017), Maluleka et al. (2018),

and Saurombe (2019) who stated that one of the root causes of unaccountability, secrecy, poor governance, as well as the low usage of archives repositories in South Africa is the unavailability of contextualised African archival training programmes in the country. Some of these authors argued that most professions such as health, finance, law, auditing and others, rely on the strength of records management. Yet, the professionals responsible for archives and records management are not educationally prepared to implement an archives and records management programme that relates to the African context in which they operate. Ngoepe (2019) contended that the current archives and records management educational programmes were not addressing the problems experienced in the continent, hence the need to transform the curriculum. For example, at the pre-conference workshop of the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (ESARBICA) held on 9–10 September 2019, only two out of 180 delegates indicated that their organisations had electronic records management systems in place. Yet, the workshop was about digital records forensics, which the majority indicated was not relevant for their environments and they would not be able to implement when they go back to their workplaces. This is an example of an educational initiative that responds more to developments in the global north than to the local context.

Other commentators have repeatedly raised the need for support in redeveloping university curricula so that they reflect local and international best practice (Lowry, 2017). Similar calls from African archival educators were reflected in the International Council on Archives (ICA) 'Africa strategy' in 2015. One element of the strategy was capacitating African archival educators in curriculum development, developing a training plan (particularly with respect to digital record-keeping) so that new knowledge can be incorporated into existing educational programmes, and building partnerships to support conservation and preservation education and training (Lowry, 2017). The question is whether the archives and records management curriculum in Africa embraces Africanisation. The study conducted by the InterPARES Africa Team (2013–2018) which yielded an inventory of archival programmes in 38 countries in the continent did not interrogate the curriculum of the offerings in terms of Africanisation. Our aim in this study is to finally examine the Africanisation of the archival curriculum in South Africa.

Africanisation within the context of higher education is described by Letsekha (2013) as a process of generating and redefining educational standards in South African higher education to ensure that teaching and learning occurs within an appropriate context of relevance. Our study utilised Africanisation from the five pillars of transformation as identified by Sibanda (2016) to analyse the infusion of curriculum transformation into the ten modules for archives and records management in an open distance e-learning (ODEL) environment in South Africa. This is done through an analysis of the curriculum at module level. Currently, the University of South Africa in Pretoria is the only university in the country that offers archives and records management at undergraduate level through blended mode, that is, print and online.

1.1. Contextual setting

In 2014, the Archival Platform (a civil society organisation linked to the University of Cape Town and the Nelson Mandela Foundation) released a two-year investigation report on the state of archives in South Africa. One of the major concerns raised in the report is that:

The state of government record-keeping is woefully inadequate in South Africa. Public archives are not equipped, resourced and positioned to do the records auditing and records management support work that they are mandated to do . . . While a handful of universities offer professional training or provide opportunities for scholars . . . most available opportunities for training and professional development are not appropriately geared to the needs of archives or practitioners. (Archival Platform, 2015, p. 149)

Indeed, as observed by Maluleka et al. (2018) only three universities out of 26 in South Africa offer programmes in archives and records management, that is, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the University of Fort Hare and the University of South Africa (UNISA). Of those three, only UNISA introduced the programme at undergraduate level, that is, at higher certificate level as access to higher education and at bachelor's degree level as one of the majors. This raises the question of where the industry recruits archivists and records managers from, especially at entry-level positions. Perhaps, this is why some scholars in South Africa such as Marutha (2016) and Ngoepe (2016) bemoaned the fact that unqualified people were being appointed as records managers in the public sector. It may be that one university is not coping with producing enough entry-level graduates for the market; hence, the industry resorts to hiring graduates with related qualifications. This has resulted in a method of post-appointment professional qualification considered for some time to be the unofficial standard in South Africa. As a result of this gap, the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa embarked on a project to develop a new bachelor's degree in archives and records management in 2014 (UNISA, 2014). The intention was to provide education and training for individuals interested in pursuing a formal qualification in this field from South Africa and beyond. The University of South Africa's mode of education delivery is through an ODeL environment. This is done through a blended or fully online mode using e-learning platforms and social media such as Facebook, blogs and WhatsApp. In an ODeL environment, students set their own pace within the university deadlines of submitting assessments.

UNISA follows a framework for the implementation of a team approach to curriculum and learning development (UNISA, 2013) to develop programmes to ensure that the programmes are appropriate for society and meet the standards of programmes as prescribed by the Higher Education Act of 1997. The framework states that a team consisting of academics with background in the discipline, education consultants and stakeholders should work together to ensure that the developed programmes are

contextualised to address societal needs and develop lifelong learners with appropriate skills to tackle challenges and contribute to societal development. Stakeholders include academics teaching similar course at other institutions, students in related or similar qualification, relevant industry stakeholders, current job/career incumbents, representatives of communities in which the graduate will work and other relevant stakeholders (UNISA, 2013).

The blended learning approach was selected as the mode of delivery for this programme. This method incorporates print and electronic media as part of the teaching and learning process (Commonwealth of Learning). The programme consists of 30 modules; ten of these modules are in archives and records management (See Annex A for the list of the modules), while the others include language, technology and other elective modules. The project began in 2014/15 and was completed in 2017 for implementation in 2018. Enrolled students commenced with the first-level modules in 2017, and the first cohort of students is expected to complete the programme by the end of 2020.

Because there was a demand for more records managers and archivists in South Africa, the University of South Africa embarked on the task of designing a new degree qualification – a Bachelor of Arts in Archives and Records Management (UNISA, 2014). This paper centres on a reflection of this qualification development project by providing an overview of the process and an evaluation of the ten modules that were produced to determine whether the new qualification is indeed Afrocentric, decolonised and transformed to address wicked problems in a country that is grappling with a government that is not responsive, unaccountable politicians, rampant corruption, poor governance, services and healthcare to mention just a few. One of the root causes of these major societal problems is the lack of archival training programmes (Tsabedze & Ngoepe, 2020). Archives are central to mitigating most of these societal challenges facing the country (Ngoepe, 2018), hence there is a need for archivists to be trained.

2. Problem statement

Post-2015-16, in the aftermath of “FeesMustFall” movement, most South African institutions reinvigorated their efforts towards Africanising curricula (Ocholla, 2020). Africanisation, in this regard, meant incorporating African heritage, culture, identity, language, theories and ways of knowing in the teaching and learning process (Ngulube et al., 2017). Archival repositories play a vital role in this process by providing access to records related to the debated issues (Nesmith, 2010). Sadly, most South African indigenous communities are undocumented in the public archives (Ngoepe, 2019). Consequently, it is difficult to imagine Africanisation without the accounts of the local people; therefore, archivists have a pivotal role to play in this process by filling these gaps in the archival holdings (Saurombe, 2018). One way of correcting this is through archival education and training. Properly contextualised archives and records

management programmes will better prepare archivists and records managers to tackle these contemporary challenges. In the wake of the demand for more Africanised curricula; this study attempted to find out whether a newly developed archives and records management programme at an ODeL institution in South Africa (UNISA) integrated culture, theories, heritage and languages as part of the Africanisation drive at the institution.

3. Conceptual framework and literature review

The purpose of this study was to explore the extent at which the curriculum for archives and records management in this particular institution has adapted its subject content and teaching methods to reflect the realities of their African student and their environment (Letseka, 2013; Louw, 2010). In this regard, five pillars of transformation, as identified by Sibanda (2016) were utilised to analyse the infusion of curriculum transformation into the ten modules for archives and records management. The pillars are: Africanisation, diversity and inclusivity, transformed assessment, technology integration and pedagogical renewal. Sibanda (2016) emphasises the need to embed African ways of knowing, theories and methods, also known as African epistemologies into the programmes through curriculum transformation at institutions of higher learning in South Africa. This, he suggests, can be achieved through community engagement by integrating the lived experiences of the communities in the curriculum.

Sibanda (2016) considers Africanisation as the first important step towards transformation as a process requiring that the curriculum must have more local content. It may also include modifying the euro-centric knowledge system to be accommodated within the African system as a temporary measure. Embedded or assumed in Africanisation is decolonisation, which “involves a deep sense of recognition and challenge to colonial forms of knowledge, pedagogical strategies and research methodologies”. The value of true curriculum transformation is in giving students and scholars who have not been fully initiated into the ways of Westernised disciplines a legitimate voice to question the standards and methods of a Westernised Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum, and to re-imagine (re-shape) what it could and should be. Curriculum transformation, on the other hand, means that it must have local content and the values that underpin the teaching and learning process, for example, the Ubuntu philosophy (a quality that includes the essential human virtues, compassion and humanity), language, and so forth.

The apartheid regime was brought down in 1994, and the new democratic government was faced with the task of dismantling an iniquitous education system (Saurombe, 2018). Just as the previous regimes, the new government also sought to use education, particularly higher education, as a tool to bring about change and correct the societal imbalances that occurred because of colonialism and apartheid (Ndimande, 2013; Muswede, 2017). It is against this background that concepts such

as the transformation in higher education, the decolonisation of higher education and the Africanisation of the curriculum became pertinent in political and academic circles (Pandor, 2018; Muswede, 2017).

Transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation are often used interchangeably when discussing change in the context of higher education. There is no single definition that really describes all these concepts (Pandor, 2018); but what seems to matter is the context in which they are applied. Arguably, transformation could be seen as an organic term which refers to changes in response to various factors that occur within the higher education environment (Muswede, 2017). For instance, currently, many institutions of higher learning are responding to the changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Transformation is therefore an ongoing process. Decolonisation of the higher education system, on the other hand, is a term that signifies an end date; which refers to a time when all the challenges brought about by colonialism and apartheid within the higher education context would have been resolved (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2017). These concepts are also linked to the concept of Africanisation, which, according to Louw (2010, p. 42), is a “renewed focus on Africa” where we embrace our African heritage, culture, identity, language and ways of knowing as an important part of our society (Ngulube et al., 2017). African history and current literature confirm that African ways of knowing, culture, heritage and languages are portrayed as inferior to Western ways of life, scholarship, as well as methods of teaching and learning (Setumu, 2015; Mbembe, 2015; Hosthemke, 2017; Ngulube, 2017). The need to change this *status quo* is evident. With reference to the ‘FeesMustFall’ movement, it is time to stop talking and start implementing (Le Grange, 2016).

The decolonisation of the higher education curriculum is a notion that goes beyond South African borders and further into the African continent (Mamdani, 2016). As much as South Africa is the one of the last countries to receive its political independence, the curricula of higher education institutions in most African countries are also struggling to shake off the colonial identity from both a social and an economic point of view (Higgs, 2016). The concept of industrialisation of the economy and urban migration characterised the nature of human interaction. The education system was also forced to be relevant to this way of life that mirrored the European culture (Horsthemke, 2017). Graduates coming from higher education institutions in South Africa needed to perpetuate this position; therefore, if communities need to change, these institutions need to produce a different kind of product. This was one of the highlights of the ‘fees must fall movement’ in 2015–2016 where institutions were tasked with decolonising their curricula and delivering programmes that were more appropriate for the South African context (Le Grange, 2016).

Reasons behind this massive countrywide protest were based on the views that 20 years after the collapse of the evil apartheid regime many black African South Africans still did not have access to free quality education as was promised by the new African National Congress (ANC) government in 1994 (Muswede, 2017; Ndimande, 2013). Furthermore, the students involved in this movement argued that the higher

education curriculum was not reflective of South Africa's diverse society in terms of culture, language and indigenous knowledge systems (Le Grange, 2016; Council for Higher Education, 2016). It is against this background that students voiced their unhappiness with the 20 year long wait and demanded to see immediate changes that would benefit those who were disadvantaged.

Referring to the higher education legal framework in South Africa, it describes a country that strives to address issues of representivity, redress, transformation and a complete restructuring of the education system (Heleta, 2016). Sadly, 20 years later, the tertiary students' class of 2015/16 claimed that the system has failed to live up to this expectation. This was a reminder to the government and academic community of the necessity to urgently change the *status quo* and implement the suggested changes. The decolonisation debate is not a new concept, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017) explains: it has been there for decades, with limited application in many African countries.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2017) explains that for decolonisation to happen it is crucial to critically dig deep to understand and disassemble the roots of colonialism. The argument here is that the process of decolonising the higher education curriculum in South Africa will not succeed should the history of the country and its influence on the education system remain unknown to the citizens of South Africa. It is difficult to interrogate history without archives and records (Saurombe, 2018). Ngulube (2002) explains that the records and the archives come in many forms such as dreams, thoughts, cave drawings, stories, research and discoveries. Critical evaluation, which is part of the decolonisation process should not exclude past information; which therefore makes all archives (e.g. records from the past government regimes) relevant in this process (Saurombe, 2018). Ngoepe (2019) bemoans the case of empty archives and undocumented formerly marginalised communities. The decolonisation project could lead to the academic community devising ways of collecting these stories and important 'unofficial' histories for our archival repositories (Saurombe, 2018).

The process of re-humanising the curriculum (NdlovuGatsheni, 2017) involves designing African curricula where African reality is considered important. Louw (2010, p. 50) states that African reality includes knowledge, skills, competencies, values, indigenous knowledge, languages, daily experience and culture. Horsthemke (2004, p. 67) warns that the higher education sector in their efforts to seek African identity, should also not make the mistake of ignoring diversity and solely seeking the African agenda. Rather the emphasis should be on emphasising how the uniqueness of Africa in terms of knowledge, culture, heritage and identity fits into and contributes to the global context of higher education (Horsthemke, 2017). Louw (2010) further advises that in order to design programmes that are Afrocentric, the developers need to incorporate Africanised activities, materials that include African views, values such as Ubuntu, African culture and African examples. Referring to UNISA (the focus of this study) it is an African university that strives to empower graduates with skills which will help them define their future. Turning to the institution's Curriculum Policy, it shows that Africanisation of the curriculum forms part of their education

agenda because the institution instructs lecturers and educational consultants to do the following:

- Accommodate (as far as possible) the diverse linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Include multi-lingual terminology lists.
- Acknowledge the richness of oral traditions, cultural heritage of students in providing alternative explanations and worldviews.
- Include indigenous knowledge systems as part of curriculum resources.

The inclusion of the African context alongside Western concepts, provides students with a more holistic education. Mainly, it will help society to understand the diverse South African community and think differently of ways to contribute positively towards South Africa's socio-economic development.

4. Scope and research methodology

This qualitative study utilised document analysis as a data collection tool. Document analysis is unobtrusive as its focus is on the products of human activity such as reports and not humans themselves. Furthermore, document analysis sources pre-date the study, and they are usually readily accessible as is the case with the current study. In this regard, the current study is based on the analysis of the ten archives and records management modules which are part of a Bachelor of Arts major as listed in Annexure A. The modules were analysed to determine if elements of transformation as outlined by Sibanda (2016) were included in the curriculum. In the analysis we looked at outcomes, content, assessment, delivery, language and technology. It was not possible to analyse transformation at programme level as the qualification is part of an already existing Bachelor of Arts. This means for a person enrolling in an undergraduate degree in archives and records management, such a student will have to enrol in an additional major which is part of Bachelor of Arts. In this regard, the authors were not able to access the qualification forms for BA General, hence the focus was only on the ten modules of the archives and records management programme. The ten archival modules are the major modules for the programme and are all compulsory, unlike the minor modules which are elective. The purposes and outcomes of the ten modules were accessed online. These were analysed thematically to determine the infusion of transformation pillars. Modules from the higher certificate in archival science, as well as postgraduate programmes were excluded from this study.

5. Findings and discussions

The results are presented as per the themes emanating from the conceptual framework. These include: Africanisation, inclusivity in terms of language, transformed assessment and technology integration.

Africanisation as defined earlier involves integrating African ways of knowing and philosophies within the qualifications, such as Batho Pele¹ principles, and Ubuntu, a philosophy that provides an African overview of societal relations, that is, social and humanistic ethics (Jacob & Nyanguru, 2013). It also involves the inclusion of African content in the curriculum. A perusal of the module forms revealed that indigenous African knowledge and theories were not embedded in the content for revised and new modules. Perhaps this may be attributed to the fact that the content of the modules that form part of BA Archives and Records was derived from the traditional archives themes. For example, the themes from the ten modules include appraisal and disposal of records, audio-visual archiving, classification systems, legislation and standards in archives and records management, ICT applications, arrangement and description, preservation and public programming. The elements of Africanisation such as oral tradition, rock art paintings and storytelling are not reflected in the modules. There was no evidence of any initiatives undertaken to address curriculum renewal and transformation. Furthermore, all the modules' objectives and purpose statements are predominantly Eurocentric.

An example can be drawn from the module or course on archival public programming and advocacy. Research in the recent past indicates that most public archival repositories in sub-Saharan Africa still remain largely unknown by the citizens of their countries (Saurombe, 2019). The module therefore focuses on helping archivists think of appropriate ways within their contexts to raise awareness about archives and get more people to engage with these records. Theories and principles taught within the course range from the Universal Declaration on Archives, the ICA's Principles on Access and the commonly known Marketing Mix used in marketing management. These are universal principles and theories, which, though good and proven as effective, are not in any sense adapted to local communities, nor is indigenous knowledge used as a basis for engagement and marketing or archival services. Hence, Ngoepe and Mosako (2019) suggest the use of 'extended archives' through murals to take archives to the people. Ngoepe and Mosako (2019) defines 'extended archives' as archival groups depicted as murals in the walls while the original archives displayed are in an archives repository. This is inspired by many rock art paintings that are found in southern Africa. Such murals can also be processed in a detailed description, indexing and cross-referencing with further digitalisation and displayed in technological media platforms to further market and promote the archives. Inclusion of such concepts and methods in course syllabi will help to Africanise the curriculum.

One set of principles that could have been included within this curriculum is the *Batho Pele Principles*. The principles were set to enable public servants to understand

¹Batho Pele is Sotho-Tswana for "People First". It is a South African political initiative aiming to enhance the quality and accessibility of government services by improving efficiency and accountability to the recipients of public goods and services. The eight principles of Batho Pele are consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money (South African Government, 2003).

and be service orientated in all spheres of their work (South African Government, 2003). The principles include the following concepts from an African perspective: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. These principles are closely linked to the purposes of doing outreach and public programming of archival repositories. For a long time, public archives within this region have focused on communicating to the public only and little effort has gone to listening to their clients (existing and potential) and effecting changes that would benefit the communities they serve (Saurombe & Ngulube, 2016). Therefore, the *Batho Pele principles* could be integrated into this curriculum to help archivists value the community's input in the services they offer.

In the modules that cover managing records, archives, as well as appraisal and disposal of records, written records take the centre stage. Archival products from African perspective such as oral history and murals are excluded. Oral history is often seen as of secondary importance to records and may even be seen as a factor working against the practices of good record-keeping. As Tough (2011) argues, the Western way of archiving does not address the relationship between oral culture and written despite itself being largely the product of a process of turning oral communications into written records. The point is also emphasised by Yeo (2019) when arguing that written records came into being as an attempt to overcome limitations of human memory. For example, Ngoepe (2020) contends that in producing minutes of the meeting, oral deliberations are made until consensus is reached which results in recorded resolutions in the form of minutes. In other words, as Turner (2012) would attest, new information emerges orally before emerging in other formats. This recorded memory was not necessitated by evidence but as an act to counter human forgetfulness.

Oral history refers to the acts of remembering and transmitting orally. In both the methods of oral history the information is stored and deemed worthy of retention by its creator for its own future reference. Just as the archivists appraise records for preservation or destruction, appraisal of remembering by those who have stories is important. As Duranti (1994) argues, the description of oral history fits the concept of a record. The concept of archival theory posits that, "to have records, we must have information (i.e. an understandable message) conveyed (i.e. created and used)" (Duranti, 1994). The remembrance is no different from any medium of communication and its storage function is as reliable as that of any other medium. Of course, the human memory is subjective but it is for its survival and adaptation as it cannot store all the information forever. Old information has to make space for new information just as repositories cannot store all records (Duranti, 1994). The arguments put forward implies that products of oral history can also be infused in archival studies as a form transforming the curriculum.

In order to progressively incorporate the use of all 11 official languages in South Africa, the Department of Information Science has created a glossary of terms for the archives and records management programme. This glossary has been translated into two indigenous languages (Northern Sotho and IsiZulu). These two languages were chosen because the majority of students who enrolled for the programmes in the

past five years, spoke these languages. It is hoped that the translation will extend to other indigenous languages, as well as other study materials. Perhaps, in future the materials will be written in indigenous languages and translated into English. This will be an opportunity to contextualise the content of the offerings to the African setting and make them relevant.

The development of a new programme offered an opportunity to transform the assessment. However, the department missed the opportunity to increase the number of modules that could adopt non-venue-based exams. In fact, all ten the modules use the venue-based assessment. As a result, there is no alternative assessment, even though the programme is offered in a blended mode.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

This study utilised the concept of Africanisation to analyse the integration of curriculum transformation into the ten modules for archives and records management offered in an ODeL environment by UNISA. This was done through an analysis of the curriculum at module level. In this study, we established that transformation forms a critical part of the development of qualification programmes at UNISA as it is a university policy requirement that needs to be considered at each step of qualification development. However, signs of transformation were not evident in the Bachelor of Arts in Archives and Records Management programme. The study established that an attempt was made to transform the archival curriculum at study material development and module delivery level. As a result, an opportunity was missed to transform archival curriculum in the development of the new bachelor degree which was implemented in 2017. Focus on transformation was more on language as African ways of knowing, teaching and learning methods, as well as African theories and practise were not integrated into the curriculum. It is clear from the discussion that transformation is not only about content or the language of instruction of the content. It is recommended that transformation of the curriculum should start at programme level rather than module level. The department is best placed to slowly transform the curriculum by embracing African philosophies. Furthermore, there is a role that archival educators in Africa can play together with active professional associations such as the South African Society of Archivists; the Eastern and Southern African Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives, and the International Council on Archives by setting up committees to review and develop generic curriculum that can be customised by individual universities.

Furthermore, even principles for authentication of records can be extended to oral tradition using archival principles or concepts. These key matters can be infused into these modules as they undergo revision in future for quality assurance and improvement purposes. It should be noted that there is no organic African model available in the current literature. African archival theorists need to go back to their cultural roots and imagine a way of doing things that does not begin with Eurocentric

concepts even though this would mean unlearning, to a certain extent. For example, oral tradition, although often seen as of secondary importance to records, is one of the ways to integrate indigenous culture into the Western dominant archival discourse. Archives in African tradition have been preserved orally or through rock art paintings. Perhaps, as recommended by Ngoepe and Mosako (2019) in one of the modules, especially the introductory ones, a definition of a record should be revisited to include murals and rock art paintings as ‘extended archives’, within the African context. The extended archives offer an opportunity not to be missed to build an inclusive participatory archive in South Africa.

The ODeL mode of education delivery enables the Department of Information Science to have a wide reach into South Africa; and possibly this could be the answer to the shortage of archivists and records managers in the country (Archival Platform, 2015). Referring to the Archival platform report (2015) with the shortage of qualified archivists and records managers in South Africa, UNISA has the capacity to offer archives and records management programmes countrywide and even beyond South Africa. The InterPARES Africa Project (2018) clearly pointed out that there is a need for more archives and records management programmes. The uniqueness of ODeL offerings could enable Department of Information Science the opportunity to get more people interested in this new programme and hopefully contribute to filling the personnel gap, particularly at public archival repositories and other organisations.

The overview given in this study has obvious limitations as other academics responsible for developing the programme were not interviewed. Lastly, the views included were mainly from the authors of this article. Therefore, future studies should include the views of other academics who participated in the development of the programme.

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Annexure A: List of BA modules offered

- Managing records
- Managing archives
- Appraisal and disposal of records
- Audio-visual archiving
- Organising records: classification systems
- Legislation and standards in archives and records management
- ICT applications in archives and records management
- Organising archives: arrangement and description
- Preservation management of archives and records
- Archival programming and advocacy